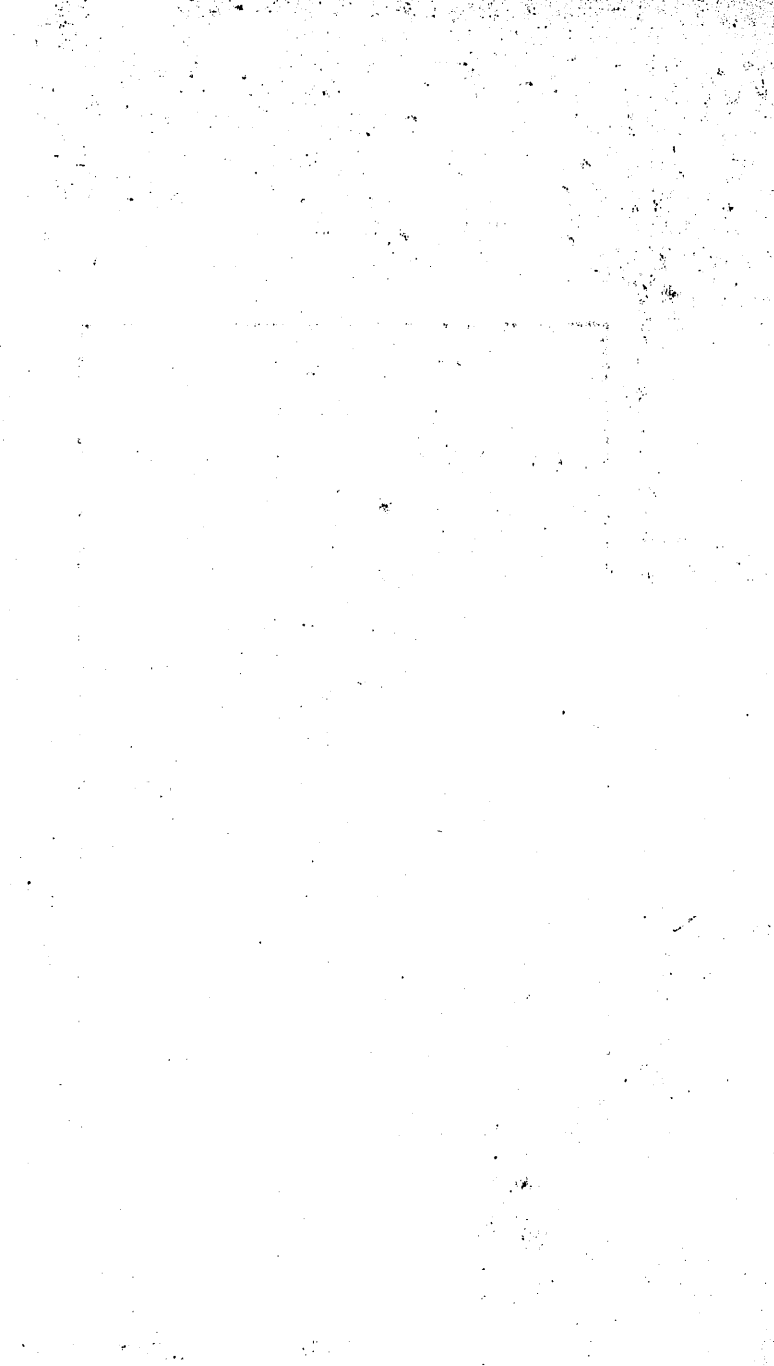


THE MODERN APPROACH
TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

JEWETT C. TOWNSEND

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By

REV. JEWETT C. TOWNSEND

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Preface

THIS book is written from the viewpoint of the pastor and Bible student rather than from that of the scholar. It has been created because of the deep conviction that some comprehensive work is needed by those who are interested in knowing the truth both of and about the Old Testament. Its preparation has involved a study of the conclusions of many Bible scholars and the effort has been made to present these without bringing their processes too strongly into evidence.

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation of the painstaking and laborious researches by means of which Bible scholars have succeeded in throwing light upon many problems of study which formerly were enveloped in darkness. He gratefully avails himself of these sources and acknowledges himself as dependent upon them.

So far as possible, technical terms have been eliminated in order that all discussions may be within the grasp of those who have not had the privilege of academic training. The great army of Church School teachers, as well as many others of the laity, will appreciate a single volume which will serve to direct their study in a constructive manner. It is for them that this volume is produced with the prayer that it may serve as a constructive guide to their understanding of the world's greatest Book.



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CHAPTER I

New Methods of Study

THE Old Testament contains vast mines of hidden treasure for him who will persevere in study and is willing to avail himself of a key which is capable of unlocking the door of the past. Sometimes prejudice causes the refusal of an adequate key. Too much of so-called Bible study is merely Bible reading, and there is a real difference between the two. One may read the Bible through, and then re-read it, repeating the operation time and again as some devout souls do, and still acquire but little real understanding of its message.

The study of the Bible involves infinitely more than memorizing verses, or quoting proof texts, or even deriving comfort from the high sentiments which the Book contains. It must be studied as any other book and its historic situations tested by comparison with other writings.

When one speaks of the modern approach to the Bible, he is speaking of a method of Bible study and

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interpretation which has developed during the past century and come into general use only within the last fifty years. This method has exerted a transforming influence in many ways.

Real Bible study is quite different now from what it was in former generations. This statement must not be interpreted as meaning that all schools now make use of modern methods of study. Such a statement would not be literally true. It applies only to those progressive schools which are ready to avail themselves of all the scientific facts which serve to illuminate the darkness of those days of which the Old Testament treats.

The real student is gripped by the spirit of investigation and set to sifting and searching and digging. Everything is analyzed from all visible viewpoints and then is plucked up by the roots that they also may be studied. No part of the universe is too sacred to be invaded by the investigator. There is no limit to the range of his researches. He not only penetrates every portion of the earth, but with his telescope he breaks down the barriers of space and journeys to the stars; while with his microscope he brings forth a universe which God had hidden away out of sight. These things being true, shall we wonder that the searchlight of the investigator has been turned upon the Bible to discover its real message?

From the modern viewpoint, the world is ever changing and progressing. God did not create a world in six days and then, having fulfilled his pur-

NEW METHODS OF STUDY

pose, retire to a long period of rest. As Creator and Director he must be ever active in his universe.

Everywhere in nature we find order and system and the perfect co-ordination of all its parts. But order does not of necessity mean changelessness. The story of the world is one of change, of development, of unfolding, of ceaseless evolution from the simpler to the more complex. The Old Testament is full of such evidences and one of the chief values of modern Bible study is to search them out and interpret their message.

Gradually the findings of the scientists as to the manner in which the physical universe has originated are becoming the common property of all laymen, and they are profiting thereby. Those who approach their Bibles with open minds are coming to realize that accurate information concerning the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, as well as plants and animals, must be sought in textbooks of astronomy, geology, and biology. No student of these subjects would appeal to the Bible for such information, for that would force upon the scriptures a burden which they never were intended to bear.

Not all people find themselves ready to try the new viewpoint and to study their Bibles in the light of scientific truths. To some, the term "modernism" signifies only that which is to be avoided. They are possessed of an ingrained conviction that old established views and interpretations must be correct and that, therefore, anything which breaks with these is

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to be regarded with distrust. Some of the more radical go even beyond this position and brand as heretics those who are not satisfied with the traditional interpretations.

According to the earlier theological view, the Bible was an inerrant book, perfect in all its parts, and God was to be considered as responsible for every portion of it. Because divinely given, it was supposed to be different from other books to the extent that ordinary tests and standards should not be applied to it. Its writers were lifted above the limitations of ordinary humanity and merely wrote as amanuenses of Jehovah. To those who still hold this view, the discovery that it is not infallible is a distinct shock.

It is reassuring to know that an infallible Bible is not necessary to faith and neither is it the center of our religion. The title, "the word of God," as applied to the Bible, is not to be interpreted literally. If it were, then we should find our problems deepened rather than otherwise. If it were literally true, it would be exceedingly difficult to harmonize conflicting statements and to preserve our conviction of a God who is consistent and dependable.

Looked upon from the viewpoint of the historical method of study and interpretation, the Bible assumes new interest. Many of its moral and historical problems which formerly have been stumbling blocks to thoughtful people now disappear and the very humanity of the book makes it understandable.

NEW METHODS OF STUDY

When we lay the literature, history, and religion of the Hebrews alongside that of other peoples, testing them by the same rules and applying to them the same methods of interpretation, we are guilty of no irreverence; but, on the contrary, we are affording our Bible an opportunity to demonstrate its right to live.

When we say to the adherents of other religions, "Prove your faith; submit your sacred books to a jury of the world;" we are only saying what they have as just a right to say to us. If our Bible is unable to stand the test of intensive study, it is unworthy of the place it occupies in our religion. Probably the demonstration of its ability to stand this test has been one of the greatest contributions of this new method of study.

The term, "Biblical Criticism," is only a term and, as such, it is entirely harmless though some have seemed much afraid of it. Probably the better term is "Literary Criticism" or "The Historical Method of Bible Study." It means an intensive study of the Bible with the purpose of discovering its structure, composition, date, authorship, historicity, and purpose. Only modern methods of scholarship can achieve this result.

As previously stated, this method of study is comparatively new and some students still seem reluctant to face the truths which it reveals. This was evidenced in the Scopes trial in Tennessee a few years ago. The reluctance of some to have science

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taught in the schools doubtless is due to the fact that some interpretations of the Bible are unable to stand the light of truth and those who adhere to them are not willing to relinquish their prejudices.

Every real Bible student today finds himself confronted by the question, "Do I desire to know the truth even though that knowledge may destroy some of my preconceived ideas?"

Science has not changed the Bible or its truth, but it has radically transformed men's interpretation of it. Gradually the testimony of geology, astronomy, and kindred sciences concerning the age of the earth and the processes of its formation has made its impress on the scholarship of the world until practically all institutions of higher learning have accepted it.

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth.
Lo, before us gleam her campfires,
We ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer
Boldly through the desperate winter sea;
Nor attempt the future's portals
With the past's blood-rusted key."

CHAPTER II

The Beginnings of Hebrew History

THE Old Testament is a very important book both from the viewpoint of Hebrew history and that of the Christian religion. It was the only Bible Jesus had. He quoted from it freely and his knowledge of it doubtless exerted a great influence upon his life. Today it is much read but little understood by the average layman. This is no impeachment of the layman's intelligence, but is due to the fact that Old Testament study is really difficult and the assistance of carefully prepared study books is essential. These books the layman seldom has.

The mere reading of the books of the Old Testament will give the reader but slight conception of its real teaching unless it be read in the light of those illuminating facts which are revealed through modern scholarship. He who really wants to know will avail himself of the many helpful books produced by those who have given their lives to Bible study.

No literary production, either in the Bible or elsewhere, can be fully understood without a knowledge of its origin, authorship, and the purpose for which it was written. Is it history or poetry? Is it narrative or prediction? When, where, and by whom was it written? These are questions which

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must be answered and frequently the answer must be sought outside of the text itself.

We must approach the study of our Bibles as we do that of any other book, for only thus can we hope to understand them. This is the method of modern scholarship. The Bible must be studied in the light of such contemporary history as exists and also in consideration of the findings of science throughout these modern ages. These facts inject into Bible study a new element and set the investigator at work to gather data and to weigh evidence to the end that his conclusions shall be justifiable.

The men who wrote the Biblical books were men of their own age, using the methods of composition familiar to their day. Their thought processes must be interpreted in the light of their views of history and science rather than our own.

There is no more reason why we should look to the Hebrew historians for information concerning the time or the manner of the creation of the world than to the historians of Assyria or Egypt. They were writing a history of their own people from the religious viewpoint and, as the focal point of all religion must be God, it was natural that he should be made its center and that the relationship of the people to him and his to them should form the subject matter of that history.

It probably is a fair statement concerning the Bible and its purpose if we call it the record of God's progressive self-revelation. Not all parts of

THE BEGINNINGS OF HEBREW HISTORY

it show an equal grasp of God or the same interpretation of his personality. It is interesting to trace the evolution of the idea of God through successive steps from a belief in polytheism, in which Jehovah is seen as the great God among the gods, to the purely monotheistic view of the one only and true God. This is entirely natural and understandable.

If it were possible to go back of the Hebrew people, or even back of the older civilizations, to a period a few thousand years nearer to the morning of the world's history, we doubtless would experience yet deeper interest in tracing there the early yearnings of the human heart after an unseen Presence who makes himself felt in the lives of men but who was, at that time, still unanalyzed and unnamed.

The Old Testament introduces us to a God of power who sends all things into the experience of men. Both good and evil come from him; the good as the reward of well-doing, while wars and other calamities are sent as punishment for disobedience. That was as far as the conceptions of that day had carried men's analysis of deity.

The present commonly accepted theistic theory is that God has always been seeking to reveal himself to man but that he is able to do so only as men will open their minds and assume a receptive attitude. This probably is the chief reason why some people have a clearer vision of divine truth than others. Those who refuse to approach truth with open mind and the willingness to be taught, need

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expect no real revelation of truth or understanding of the divine personality. One of the very interesting features of Old Testament study is to trace this progressive revelation of God, his characteristics, and his will concerning men.

The opening chapters of Genesis are now being regarded by most students in a vastly different light than formerly. Many considerations make it impossible to regard them as an accurate account of creation and the early history of mankind. We are forced by a recognition of the facts in nature to revise some of our former beliefs concerning the first eleven chapters. Yet we are not to discard these chapters altogether. They are of deep religious value and doubtless had a very real part in shaping the religious life of the Hebrew people.

The narrative of creation sets forth in a series of dignified and impressive pictures the sovereignty of God; his priority to and separation from all finite material nature; his purpose to constitute an ordered cosmos and, gradually, to adapt the earth to become the habitation of living beings. He exists in the beginning and the world is because he wills that it shall be.

In chapters two and three of Genesis we read, not in an historical but in a pictorial and symbolic form, how man was once innocent; how he became conscious of moral law and, through his weakness in yielding to temptation, broke that law. We find there the symbolism of a truth which must always

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have impressed mankind and which loses nothing of its force with the passing of the ages.

In chapter four we are given a vivid picture of the tragic consequences of jealousy and sin if allowed to run their course unchecked. Cain and Abel typify humanity both in their relationship to God and to each other. As merely a history of those individuals, that story would possess only passing interest and one might well wonder why it should be incorporated in the record; but as a picture of human relationships, the sacredness of life, and the fact that we are our brothers' keepers, its presence there is fully justified. Similar conclusions may well be drawn concerning other stories which form the subject matter of these opening chapters.

The history of the Hebrew people and likewise the history of God's self-revelation, as well as the crystallization of men's conception of him, begins with Abram (or Abraham) who, according to the narrative, lived to be 175 years of age. It would be a source of gratification if we were able to fix the date of his birth. This it is impossible to do, but it may aid our thinking if we assume that he may have been born at approximately 1950 B.C. This cannot be very far from correct.

The narrative of Abraham may be considered as, in the main, fairly accurate and the real beginning of Biblical history. This begins with the genealogies of Abraham in Genesis 11:26 though that was still many generations, in fact at least six or seven cen-

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turies, before the Hebrew people had a written language of their own. These genealogies may be considered in the light of history rather than tradition though originally preserved as traditions. The writer still followed the apparent system of Hebrew chronologists who seemed to consider that the farther back in history a man lived, the older he must have been and the more revered his name should be.

In the fifth chapter of Genesis we are given the generations of Adam and his descendants, and following that, the fortunes of Noah from the fifth to the tenth chapters. According to this, Adam is credited with having attained to the age of 930 years; Seth, his son, 912; Enoch, son of Seth, 905; Kenan, son of Enoch, 910; Mahalelel, son of Kenan, 895; and so on. Noah is spoken of as being 600 years old at the time of the Flood and as living 350 years afterward. How can one account for such life-spans in the face of the fact that longevity has been increasing rather than otherwise ever since accurate records have been preserved?

Some have attempted to justify this record by suggesting that they may have had a different method of computing years; but we can find nothing in these unfailing laws of the material world to substantiate such a theory. Four seasons always have made a year. We might as well face the evident fact and acknowledge it to be a matter of non-historic statements; the recording by the writer of traditions

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handed down from father to son and based on misty ideas of pre-historic ancestral greatness.

The story of Abraham and his changing fortunes begins in Ur of the Chaldees, Ur being located not far above the mouth of the river Euphrates. Abram, Nahor and Haran were the sons of Terah, living at Ur, in Babylonia. The narrative opens where Terah took Abram and Abram's wife, Sarai, and Lot, the son of Haran, and journeyed northward to the headwaters of the Euphrates River. There (in Padan Aram) Terah died and later, Abram and Sarai, with Lot, removed to Canaan; a long journey to the westward around the end of the Arabian Desert. This followed the call of Abram and the promise that he should be the father of a mighty nation (Gen. 12).

When we are thinking later on of the similarity of Hebrew and Babylonian traditions, it will be well to bear in mind these facts concerning the place of Abraham's birth and the probable influence of Babylonian history and thinking upon his life. It really was a stupendous undertaking for this man to shake off the influences of his youth, to sever the ties which bound him to home and friends, and to go forth into an unknown land in obedience to the mandate of an inner voice. Probably it was inevitable that he should carry with him much Babylonian lore which later manifested itself in the writings of his people.

CHAPTER III

Traditions and Old Beliefs

BACK of Abraham and the beginnings of authentic Hebrew history there stretch long centuries of unwritten history; those silent years of geologic changes, of moulding thought and developing character which were the real foundation generations of those people from whom our basic interpretation of God has come down to us.

So far as the Hebrews were concerned, those preceding centuries lived only in traditions handed down from father to son, for that people had no written language until after their establishment in Canaan, following the death of Moses.

In this connection, one may well question, "Then how did Moses write the ten commandments on the tablets of stone?" Many modern scholars believe that he did not do so, but that the statements in Exodus concerning the commandments date from the final compilation of documents after the close of the Babylonian Captivity when the books of the law assumed their present form. If these basic laws did come from the hand of Moses, he would write them in the Egyptian language in which he had been schooled. His people were slaves and probably unable to read or write. There is nothing to indicate

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that they carried the Egyptian written language with them into Canaan, for their history, when it finally was written, was in the Hebrew tongue and written with different characters from the Egyptian.

From these and other considerations, we must assume that all the history of this people which we have prior to their establishment in Canaan must consist of traditions and folk-lore tales handed down from father to son through many generations. In much the same way, the traditions of the American Indians have been handed down, recounted at camp-fires by old chiefs who were immensely proud of the wonderful achievements of their ancestors.

Many Hebrew traditions were held in common with the Babylonians with whom they had dwelt before Abraham went forth from the land of his fathers. The following chapter is devoted to a discussion of similarities of the traditions of these two peoples. Babylonians and Egyptians and other ancient nations of the East had written languages and were thus able to hand down records to posterity.

Much valuable information concerning events which are merely mentioned in Hebrew history comes to us from inscriptions on monuments in other countries as well as from clay tablets which have been unearthed. This information from the monuments deals chiefly with the foreign wars in which Israel was embroiled and helps to fix both their causes and their dates. This statement holds good concerning Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt.

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When the time came for someone to write a manuscript for the book of Genesis, or the beginnings of history, quite naturally he was not satisfied to begin with the story of Abraham for he would realize that their history must antedate that by many generations. With this in mind, he proceeds to draw upon the traditions of his people and from them he writes the opening chapters of his book. They must not be regarded as truly history and neither should they be literally interpreted; but they do possess real value as records of the views of that day and as pictures of their understanding of some questions which men have always asked and which many still fail to understand.

There are certain questions which awaken the interest of everyone. How did this wonderful world come to be? How do you and I happen to be here? How did sin enter in? Why must men toil? Why must the righteous suffer as the unrighteous? Thoughtful men were poring over these questions and seeking answers. From father to son, theories and conclusions had been handed down. The early Genesis stories are, at least in part, the answers to these questions. The writer does his best to tell the story of beginnings before he goes on to transcribe his history of the patriarchs of Israel.

It is entirely natural that this writer should hark back to the mythical "Golden Age" in which it was believed that men lived without labor, that animals talked, and wherein sin and suffering had not yet

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entered to cast their blight over the human family. According to the Hebrew traditions, that age must have been back there in the morning of the world to which the writer was looking as he wrote. For him, it constituted the opening chapter of the history of his people.

Powerful lessons come to us from the book of Genesis, and I wonder if the impartation of these lessons may not have been one of the chief purposes of the writer as well as his evident desire to answer some questions which thoughtful men were asking.

Here again the religious emphasis is made manifest. He brings his answers in allegories, in word pictures which illustrate great truths. God is back of all things; his word is law and it is through him that all the universe has been fashioned. Thus far at least, all will agree with him, for the most thorough-going evolutionist has no other explanation for the real beginning of things. He must admit that some unseen power must have been active in the universe to produce those great laws and processes which have been in operation to bring the world to the degree of perfection in which we know it. The writer of Genesis comes into conflict with later scientific knowledge only when he begins to theorize and attempt to explain just how God really accomplished results.

This writer sees temptation coming insidiously, as a serpent, and leading these early dwellers in a perfect and sinless world to yield to their natural desire

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to order their own lives in accordance with their inclinations. The forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden is his picture of disobedience and its results. We must bear in mind that the writer is thinking of a Golden Age somewhere in the remote past in whose experiences he finds his answers to life's great questions.

It is because of disobedience that woman must conceive in pain and be subject unto her husband (Gen. 3:16); and because of disobedience, man must obtain bread by the sweat of his brow and eventually go back again to become a part of the parent dust (3:17-19, 23). To the writer, disobedience explains both toil and death as well as pain.

We must understand that he is speaking of the race rather than of individuals. The name "Adam" is used in its generic sense, meaning "the man"; while "Eve" means "living" or "life" and is given to primitive woman because she is the mother of all living. Adam and Eve in the capacity of individuals could not be meant; for after Cain's crime against Abel and his removal from the ancestral home, he is described as going into the land of Nod, to the eastward from Eden, and there marrying and rearing a family. This would indicate that the writer of Genesis did not regard one man and one woman as being the sole inhabitants of the earth in their generation.

Jealousy and anger and hatred lead to murder. The story of Cain and Abel is a powerful picture of the consequences of yielding to those passions which

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destroy brotherly love. Out of that story, deepening through the centuries, has come the helpful conviction that we are our brothers' keepers.

The writer explains (Gen. 6:1-4) how those mighty men of old who attained to such great age, came to be. The sons of God had become enamored of the beautiful daughters of earth and taken them in marriage and those mighty men were the offspring of this union. There was no limit to the wonderful things which might happen in that Golden Age for, he tells us, they were also the days when the Nephilim, or the giants, dwelt in the land.

Then, because of the disobedience of men, Jehovah repented that he had made man and determined that he would destroy him and all living creatures from the face of the earth. So he sent a flood, but Noah and his household were saved because of righteousness (Gen. 6ff.). It seemed fitting that men should be wiped off the face of the earth because of disobedience and wickedness, but a remnant must be left to repopulate the earth. So God blessed Noah and established his covenant with him and set a rainbow in the sky that Jehovah might remember his promise and never send another flood upon the earth (9:8-17).

Another question which troubled the people of that day was the fact that those from different portions of the country spoke different languages, though their traditions regarded them as coming from common parents. How could this thing be?

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The question was answered by another tradition to the effect that the people were making wonderful progress; they made bricks and constructed a city and a high tower whose top would reach to heaven. They planned, as it was said, to make a name for themselves. But Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, and was jealous of what they had done; so Jehovah scattered the people abroad upon the face of the earth and caused them to speak with different tongues so that there could be no further concerted action. According to the tradition, the tower was called Babel because of the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:1-10).

Probably the most interesting of the Genesis stories and the one most dwelt upon, is the story of Creation. This tradition of the Hebrews would be considered no novelty by contemporary nations, for similar stories are to be found among the traditions of many peoples. These may point to a common earlier tradition from which the sectional or tribal traditions arose, each marked by the variations with which such things are bound to invest themselves. All of these stories are interesting and indicate that in different parts of the world men were thinking and wondering and seeking to understand and to explain how the world came to be.

The Egyptians believed in many gods, each for his own purpose. One of their traditions proclaimed that the fertile slime of the Nile valley sprouted into the bodies of men, sprung from the eye of the sun-

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god. This emanation produced the material body but a later process molded the form to beauty and communicated to it a soul.

The Babylonian myth held that chaos was inhabited by a monstrous brood over which the sea, "Tiamat," presided. The god "Bel" fought with Tiamat and cut her in two, making the upper half into the heavens and the lower half into the earth, while he destroyed all the creatures within her. He next cut off his own head from which he formed man. A more complete discussion of the Babylonian creation epic is to be found in the following chapter under the head of "Babylonian Traditions."

The Phœnicians accounted for creation by means of a series of spontaneous emanations; while a Scandinavian myth explained that the gods drew the first men from the trunks of trees.

An ancient Greek account represents Prometheus as making the first man out of earth and then quickening him with fire stolen from heaven; but earlier accounts limit his work to the latter function and make men spring up out of the soil.

The supreme god of the Dakotah Indians is the creator Unkayee who, after he had finished the making of the world, took one of his own divine offspring and, grinding him to powder, sprinkled it upon the earth. This produced many worms which matured into infants, later to become full-grown Dakotahs.

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With the Hebrews the explanation of creation seemed easy enough. Their god, Jehovah, was so great that he had only to speak and it was done. He achieved creation by six creative commands on six successive days. Some have attempted to reconcile this account with the material facts of nature by explaining that each day was a long period of time, yet the wording of the account indicates no such conviction on the part of the writer. He plainly states after the recital of each day's activity, "and there was evening and there was morning, one day"; "and there was evening and there was morning, a second day." And so on to the end of the record.

On the first day God created day and night. He said, "Let there be light," and he divided the light from the darkness. On the second day he created a firmament to separate the upper from the lower waters, and "He called the firmament heaven." On the third day he gathered the waters together so that the earth appeared and, at the word of God, the earth put forth grass, herbs, and trees. On the fourth day he created lights to divide the day from the night; the sun and moon and stars. On the fifth day he created living creatures in air and water; birds and fish. On the sixth day he created beasts and creeping things and, as a final act, he created man in his own image to have dominion over all other living creatures. All of these were created male and female; man as well as animals.

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GENESIS ORDER OF CREATION—Gen. 1.

First day — Created day and night—vs. 1-5.

Second day — A firmament to divide the waters—vs. 6-9.

Third day — The dry land, grass and trees—vs. 6-13.

Fourth day — Created the sun, moon and stars—vs. 14-19.

Fifth day — Living creatures in sea and air—vs. 20-23.

Sixth day — Beasts and man; male and female—vs. 24-27.

It does not seem important to the writer that he pictures light on the first day of creation and then has the sun and the moon and the stars created on the fourth day; or that grass and trees precede the sun, which alone can woo growth from the earth. He is writing a tradition, or myth, of his ancestors and sees no difficulty in having these great and stupendous changes all come forth in a day at the word of God; though scientific research has revealed that their achievement must have taken millions or billions of years.

A second Genesis account is found in the second chapter, beginning with the fourth verse, in accordance with which plant life springs up under the influence of the mist and rain. Man is made from the dust of the ground and a garden is planted which he is to tend. However it may be in the case of the animals we are not told, but, according to this second account, man at least was not created male and female. On the contrary, lest man be lonely, while he was in a deep sleep, God later took from his side a rib from which he made woman as a help-meet.

The traditions of the nation are matters of

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growth. Let us illustrate. As referring to the origin of things, people naturally wondered how the world came to be and their intelligence demanded an explanation. None being available in their national history, someone would suggest that it may have occurred in this way, and another in that. In the process of time someone would advance a theory which seemed reasonable. Those accepting it would repeat it to others. Thus it would pass on from lip to lip and from father to son. After a few generations it would acquire the authority of antiquity and people would say, "It must be true." So another tradition would be born.

CHAPTER IV

Babylonian Traditions

THE rediscovery of Babylonia and Assyria through excavations which have been conducted on the sites of ancient cities in the Euphrates valley and along the banks of the Tigris, has placed at the disposal of students an enormous mass of material which has thrown much light on the early beliefs of the Hebrews as well as those of the people of Babylonia.

It is now a well-recognized fact that Hebrews and Babylonians started out on their national careers with much in common. The traditional home of Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees, was in the Euphrates valley in Babylonia. Here, too, was the traditional location of the tower of Babel in the land of Shinar, a general designation of the Euphrates valley. Mount Ararat, the traditional landing place of the ark, also is located in the northern portion of this same section of country.

The traditions which appear in the early history of the Hebrews evidently were very old while their nation was yet young. Those traditions undoubtedly had formed for centuries a part of the real life and consciousness of their ancestors in Babylonia.

The stories of ancient times; those of Creation

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and the Deluge, and the wanderings of Terah, the father of Abraham; together with Abraham's entrance into Palestine and the subsequent changing fortunes of the patriarchs were held and treasured by the Hebrew people, though not reduced to writing until a very late date.

The excavations which have been carried on in Babylonia during the past ninety years, and more notably during the past fifty years, have given to students great illumination not alone concerning Babylonian history, but that of the Hebrews as well. Whole libraries of clay tablets have been recovered from buried ruins which have shed light on human history for a period embracing more than four thousand years before the opening of the Christian era, one tablet which was unearthed at Nippur dating from 7000 B.C.

Through the discovery of these clay tablet libraries it is possible to reconstruct much of the history of these ancient civilizations, and this reconstruction has thrown much light on our Bible history as well as aiding greatly in its interpretation.

It is of interest to note the manner in which the first discovery of these tablets was made. It was purely accidental. Back in 1811 A.D., Claudius James Rich, a resident of the British East India Co., became interested in the ruins of Babylon and the mounds situated near the site of the ancient city of Nineveh. He found numerous little clay tablets in deep gullies cut by centuries of rain. These tablets

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were covered by wedge shaped characters. He saved them carefully and later presented them to the British Museum.

The first systematic excavations were made by a representative of the French government, P. C. Botta, who had been sent as vice-consul to Mosul, on the upper Tigris, in 1842. He became interested in the mounds in that vicinity and, in the course of his excavations, unearthed a group of buildings which proved to be the palace of Sargon, the king of Assyria from B.C. 722 to 705. Many things pertaining to a lost civilization were there revealed which proved to be of immense interest to the entire archæological world.

Other expeditions were organized from time to time, Germany, England, and the United States sharing in the search; and each expedition revealed thousands of tablets. The history of these various expeditions and the historic wealth which they have revealed is given in most interesting manner by numerous writers. This is available to those who desire to give the matter further consideration. In this treatise, which is not designed as archæological, it would not seem necessary to discuss it at length. However, we will be interested in the traditions of Creation and the Flood.

THE CREATION MYTH

There appear to have been various renderings of the Creation myth in Babylonia, each centering about

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a local deity. In most cases this represents a contest between the forces of evil and lawlessness, symbolizing the wintry and rainy season, and the opponents of those forces who are endeavoring to establish law and order. The hero who triumphs in the contest is in each case the chief deity of that particular center. In Nippur, which early acquired a sacred position, it is Enlil, the city's patron, who is represented as quelling a general uprising of the powers of nature. At Eridu, situated near the Persian Gulf, it is Ea, a water deity. At Uruk, it is Anu, a solar deity. At Sippar, the sun-god, Shamash, is pictured as conqueror. These all would be the early phases of the story. In the course of time these lesser gods must give way to the claims of the god of the city of Babylon, Marduk, who is represented as accomplishing a task in which others had failed.

There is great similarity between the Genesis story of creation and that of the Babylonians. In both of them, chaos originally prevailed—the "earth was void and waste" and "darkness was over the face of the deep." In both accounts, primeval darkness and the presence of water everywhere must impress the reader.

The Babylonian myth is highly figurative. Apsu, antedating heaven and earth, is the watery expanse. Tiamat, the mother of all, is the watery deep. It is a case of water everywhere. In the process of time, other gods are created; but a contest between the gods finally eliminates all but Tiamat. But Tiamat's

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rule cannot permanently endure. Anshar, the god who presides over their assembly, delegates his son Marduk to arm himself and enter into the contest against Tiamat.

Marduk provides himself with a net with which to ensnare Tiamat, creating destructive winds to arouse her; and, mounting his chariot, called "The Storm," he rushes to the fray. The description as given on the tablets is graphic. Marduk prevails, overcoming Tiamat, the demon of chaos and darkness. The body of Tiamat is then divided, one half forming the firmament to keep the upper, or heavenly, waters in place and to separate them from the waters beneath.

Then follow other creative acts similar to those of Genesis though the same order is not followed. This tradition was inscribed on a succession of tablets some of which were not recovered so the complete recital cannot be given. The eighth act of creation was that of man. Allusions in other writings indicate that Marduk also created animals and other living creatures.

This creation story has been taken from the fragments of clay tablets found in the library of Ashurbanapal, king of Assyria (668-626 B.C.). However, other similar accounts are available and some very interesting variations appear. Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph.D., discusses these in his *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*. Always, the gods are prominent and numerous, of whom Marduk is chief. The other gods seem to have their personality submerged in his. This

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may be explained by the fact that Marduk was the god of Babylon, the chief city. One tablet tells us that

“Ea is the Marduk of canals.
Ninib is the Marduk of strength.
Nergal is the Marduk of war.
Zamama is the Marduk of battle.
Enlil is the Marduk of sovereignty and control.
Nebo is the Marduk of possession.
Sin is the Marduk of illumination of the night.
Shamash is the Marduk of justice.
Adad is the Marduk of rain.”

In Babylonian astrology, the heavens were divided into three great divisions; one assigned to Anu, one to Enlil, and the third to Ea. These three gods play a large part in Babylonian theology. They probably were originally local deities; Anu being the sun god, Enlil the storm god, and Ea a water deity. Thus, in the process of time, they came to symbolize the three regions of the universe; the heavens, the earth with its atmosphere, and the waters around and under the earth.

THE BABYLONIAN DELUGE

The main version of the Babylonian Deluge, or Flood, myth also came from the great library gathered by Ashurbanapal. This myth is thought to have had its rise in the fact of the annual overflow of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers which caused great suffering and loss. Eventually the country developed an elaborate system of canals by means of which to

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control this overflow and thus to transform this annual curse into a blessing. In many particulars, the Babylonian myth is similar to that of the Hebrews.

The gods had determined to destroy mankind in order to prevent men from attaining immortality like themselves. But one of the gods, named Ea, the friend and benefactor of mankind, sent a warning to a man named Utnapishtim, warning him of the threatened flood and instructing him to build a ship into which he was to take his family and a pair of each kind of animals. The ship was to be constructed in accordance with certain specifications and made watertight with asphalt and pitch. It was a seven-storied structure with nine compartments.

During the storm which lasted six days, the gods were terrified. The tablet describes them,—“The gods crouch like dogs in an enclosure; the mistress of the gods howls aloud.” When the seventh day approached and the storm ceased, the ship came to rest on Mount Nizir. Here it rested for seven days and then Utnapishtim sent out in succession a dove, a swallow, and a raven to ascertain if the waters had abated. When, finally, the raven, the third bird sent out, did not return, Utnapishtim brought an offering and a sacrifice to the mountain top and made his offering. Then “The gods smelled the odor; the gods smelled the sweet odor; the gods like flies gathered around the sacrificer.”

Then after the waters had subsided, Enlil, the god of the upper atmosphere and of storms, and who was

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held to be responsible for the Deluge, became reconciled to Ea's kindness in saving Utnapishtim. Ea, as the friend of humanity, pleads with Enlil not to bring on another deluge. Enlil responds to this appeal and blesses Utnapishtim and his wife. They are promised that they shall be on a level with the gods and shall dwell at the confluence of the streams.

The same similarities in the moral laws of the Hebrews and the Babylonians may be noted and the two codes enter into similar details. The old laws of "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth," and the details of many human relationships are to be found in both.

The now famous "Code of Hammurabi," king of Babylon in about 2000 B.C., was discovered by a French excavator during the winter of 1901-2. In that code, Hammurabi announces himself as being named by the gods as king of Babylon.

CHAPTER V

How the Bible Should Be Viewed

THE word "Bible" means "the books"; in the the Greek, "Ta Biblia." In common usage, it has reference to the collection of books or manuscripts, literally, "Rolls," which were assembled together and printed as a single volume.

During the later Old Testament days and also during New Testament days up to a comparatively recent date, it existed only in the form of manuscripts. The first printed text was in Italy when the Jews who were there printed the Psalter in 1475. The first complete Bible was printed at Soncino, Italy, in 1488.

There is evidence that many original manuscripts no longer are in existence. Those which do exist evidently have been recopied, altered to some extent, and combined with others. As a general statement concerning Old Testament writings it will not be misleading to say, they have been collected, revised, and compiled by men known as redactors.

The time was when many people believed in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. They saw God not alone inspiring men to write, but revealing the words themselves so that, as it was said, "every word is the word of God." They believed that every part of the Bible came from him, that it could contain no

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error, and that all portions were of equal value. There still are some who cling to this untenable view, but such a view could scarcely be regarded as complimentary to God when we consider the many conflicting statements and the changing conception of God which it portrays.

It is impossible to remove the human element from the writing of the Bible. There also is a vast difference between inspiration and dictation. The one is altogether within the power of a great spiritual Being but the other is not. God can inspire men both to do and to be, but he can scarcely dictate words and sentences.

We are told that devoted men of old wrote as they were moved upon by the holy spirit. No doubt that is true. Does it not still continue to be true? I am convinced that many modern writers are inspired of God to write great books which move mightily upon the hearts of men, inspiring them in their turn to do and to be.

Inspiration means God's endowment of a man for the special work before him. It need not necessarily involve revelation. A man knows certain facts and inspiration leads him to tell them in his own way. In this manner, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote their versions of the life of Jesus. All four are different though agreeing in their essential parts. The same thing is true of the Old Testament. Man's hand, and mental processes, and prejudices, and the

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varying interpretations of the day in which he lived are everywhere manifest.

One of the first things which we should attempt to settle in our thinking is, how and by whom was the Bible written? Verbal inspiration would make man a mere automaton, a mouth-piece without need of mind or will. It would lay the responsibility for all the errors and intensely human records of the Old Testament at the door of God, who really should be responsible only for moving men to write the truth of their times as they understood it.

When Moses went into Mount Sinai and sought intercourse with God and brought back the engraved tablets of stone; and when he said that God had given them the law, just what did he mean? Surely not that God's hand had carved. Inspired of God, we see the old law-giver laboriously carving with a hard stone upon a softer one the basic laws for a young nation. And they were just as surely God's laws.

God always uses humanity as the instrument in his hands to work his will and bear his message. The only visible or oral angels who have ever done God's work in his world have been human beings, filled with the divine spirit and willingly yielding themselves to the divine persuasion. Such men, in different ages of the world's history, have been moved to write the truth as they have understood it, and the religious development of their fellows as they have noted it. As we read, we are better able to understand it because it is filled with human nature and human frail-

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ties and because it is the record of men's struggle upward toward God and truth and righteous life.

The Bible is an intensely human book, though it records God's progressive revelation of himself and will. It expresses those truths and laws of life which men, through the changing ages, have believed that God would speak if he possessed vocal organs and were limited to our means of communicating thoughts and feelings.

Inspiration does not involve the suspension of a man's natural faculties or destroy personality or abolish differences in education or character. This is plainly evident in the different writers of Scripture. The poet remained a poet; the philosopher a philosopher; the historian an historian; each with his own idiosyncrasies, ways, and methods; and each must be interpreted by the laws of his own literature, and in the light of the day in which he lived.

If we take these truths into consideration in our study of the Bible, we shall go farther toward arriving at a fair interpretation of its real teaching. As J. Patterson Smyth says, "The right way to make a theory of inspiration is not by deciding beforehand what God must have done, but by carefully examining the Bible to find what he has done."

If people will thus investigate for themselves, they may be forced to revise some of their preconceived ideas, for the commonly held views on disputed points and matters of differing interpretation,

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usually are inherited views rather than having been arrived at through a process of logical analysis.

Let those who are mentally disturbed, try studying their Bibles by the topical method. Let them take some subject in which they are interested and, using a concordance, search out everything bearing on that subject, and then compare and weigh their evidence. Take, for example, the subject of sin, or angels, or demonology; or take immortality, or baptism, or the virgin birth, or any of those topics on which Jesus expressed himself; carefully read and list in double columns the evidence; compare the two and the result may alter opinions.

One very evident fact which confronts us in our Old Testament study is that different men chronicled the same events. Then, later on, someone found and combined these old documents, compiling a new one. This is the work of the redactor or compiler.

Those scholars who have been thorough in their researches, find two independent and parallel narratives of the patriarchal age. They call them the "J" and the "E" documents. In "J," Jahweh or Jehovah is used as the designation of God; while in "E," Elohim or Lord is used. These two are combined by the compilers, producing "J.E." There also are fragments called "P," or Priest-code, and evidently springing from the later priestly influence. This code, on the basis of its internal evidence, can scarcely be older than 444 B.C. This would, of

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course, date all writings which contain this source, at this time or later.

From this combination of sources, we find two accounts of Creation and two of the Flood; two explanations of the origin of the name Bethel; also other groups of parallel narratives. These must be investigated and compared in consideration of all the facts before any fair conclusion can be drawn.

It undoubtedly is true that an overemphasized reverence for the Bible has deterred many from studying it with sufficient care to really understand it. The so-called conflict between science and religion is in reality a conflict between science and a misinterpreted Bible. The writers of Scripture lay no claims to scientific knowledge. The Bible consists of compiled documents, having to do with the development of religion and the idea of God, and recording such secular history as seems to relate to these.

Where the findings of science are brought into consideration, as, for instance, in the discussion of the Creation narrative; there should be no hesitation about allowing science to rule. Science must be permitted to rule in its own realm and the Bible in the realm of religion.

CHAPTER VI

How the Bible Grew

THERE is a great truth expressed in the statement that the Bible grew. Those who shared in producing the original manuscripts probably had no idea that they were writing for posterity. It was only after the lapse of years that these scattered fragments of history and literature were assembled together and made to assume the dignity of a book.

It may be in order just here to mention the canonization of the Old Testament books, for this is the term applied to the approval which was given to certain writings by those who had the matter under consideration. It is a well-known fact that not all ancient manuscripts were included and it is quite possible that some may have been rejected whose inclusion would have been of value.

There is a group of books known as Apocrypha some of which were originally recognized as a part of the Old Testament and, in fact, still are by a portion of the Christian world. They appear in the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Scriptures, and are still in general use in the Eastern church. The name "Septuagint" was originally applied because of a tradition that the Old Testament books were the work of seventy-two writers, or translators;

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hence the name, meaning the seventy. In the Western church there has been much divergence of opinion concerning the use of the apocryphal writings and even at this time there is no uniformity of attitude toward them, especially in Europe. As they are not sanctioned by the Jewish church nor a part of the Hebrew Bible, most branches of the modern Protestant church also reject them as inspired sources of doctrine or reliable history. They formerly were printed between the testaments of the old Bibles. Chapter XVII is devoted to the apocryphal books.

The canonization, or the placing of the seal of ecclesiastical approval on the New Testament books, was a definite event and the act of a council of Christian church leaders at the Third Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. The approval of the Old Testament books is obscure and probably was not achieved by the action of any official group. They seem gradually to have come into recognition during those last centuries before Christ and during the opening period of the Christian era.

As arranged in the Bible, the books are not in chronological order. The fact that Genesis is the story of beginnings and therefore is placed first, is no indication that it was written first. Our subsequent study will reveal the approximate time when the different books were written. Those who have made this a matter of special study have had to take many things into consideration, and sometimes have as-

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signed certain dates relatively, in view of other known dates which have helped them in their task.

All of the Old Testament books with the exception of portions of Ezra and Daniel were originally written in Hebrew; which, in itself, is a commentary on the time when they were written if the Hebrews had no written language until after their establishment in Canaan. This would entirely preclude the possibility of the Mosaic authorship of the books of the law. Some fragments of records may have come down from Moses, but if so they must have been meager and probably written in the Egyptian language.

One of the great difficulties which confront the student of the Old Testament is the fact that Hebrew historians never seem to be impressed with the need of making exact statements. It is readily to be noted that many references to periods of elapsed time are made in sevens and multiples of seven; or in forties and multiples of forty.

The Judean chronicler gives exactly 480 (12 times 40) years from the Exodus to the foundation of Solomon's Temple, 480 years from the founding of the Temple to the return from the Exile (535 B.C.). He also gives just half that period, 240 years, for the duration of the northern kingdom and divides the history of that kingdom into three exact periods of eighty years. It also is to be noted that the life-span of Moses, the lawgiver of sacred memory, is divided into three periods of 40 years each.

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This loose method of chronology cannot stand the test of comparison and investigation.

There also are certain things in the way of assumptions which must be considered. Because Moses comes down in tradition as a law giver, all laws are ascribed to him. Because David may have written some martial poetry, all Psalms are attributed to him. Because Solomon became noted for his wisdom, he is regarded as the author of Ecclesiastes and the book of Proverbs.

A very sincere effort has been made to determine the chronology of Old Testament events. Those who assumed that the early traditions were historic and given in sequence, tried to count backward generation by generation, using the old genealogies as guides, and thus to fix the dates of early history, even to the creation of the world.

One of the most celebrated of these attempts was made by James Usher, an Irish theologian, but then living in England, who in about 1650 A.D., gave to the world his chronology of the Bible, based on a literal acceptance of the genealogies of Genesis and regarding the Genesis stories as authentic history. According to his figures, the world was created 4004 years before Christ. This was long accepted as correct and many Bibles were printed with his figures in the margin; some even supposing that they were a veritable part of the Bible itself.

Then came the days of scientific research when men began to study the indisputable evidences within

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the earth itself; its strata, and rock formations, and fossil remains, and other evidences of long ages of change. Then they came to realize that Usher's conclusions could not possibly be correct, for the earth must have stood many millions, some believe billions, of years to make possible the great geologic changes which it has undergone.

Most significant evidence as to the great age of the world is to be found in the great coal fields which underlie so many portions of our own as well as other countries and which could not possibly have been formed in six thousand years. Some of these are found many hundreds of feet beneath the surface. Time must be allowed for the deposits of vegetable matter to accumulate; then to be covered by these hundreds of feet of earth through geologic changes; and then, through chemical changes, to be transformed into coal. That must be the work of millions of years.

It is not relatively so difficult to tell about when the books of the Bible were written, but it is altogether impossible for anyone to tell when the world was created. Our only plausible suggestion of how God brought about creation is given by science, which sees a beginning in some unexplainable manner through creative power, followed by long ages of unfolding and development. This is in very brief, the theory of evolution which still sees God as a supreme Intelligence back of the creative processes.

In thinking of the parallel accounts of certain

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events which we find in the Bible, where two or more older accounts have been combined and incorporated in the narrative, we must pre-suppose the existence of other writings before the time when the books assumed their present form. We know that this must be true, but to what extent we cannot say. In some Old Testament accounts, this method of compilation is very evident; but it is entirely possible that the same method may have been used in compiling other accounts which contain within themselves no evidences of it.

The following are a few of the original sources mentioned in the Bible text and which may be read by all. Some of these are mentioned in numerous places, but only one reference is given here. "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (I Kings 15:23), "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel (I Kings 16:27), Commentary of the book of kings" (II Chron. 24:27). These are most commonly quoted as the writer copies in part from the previous author and then cites his reader to the authority whence further details are available.

Other old documents are "History of Nathan the prophet" (II Chron. 9:29), "Visions of Iddo the seer" (II Chron. 9:29), "Book of Jashar" (II Sam. 1:18), "Book of the wars of Jehovah" (Num. 21:14), "History of Shemaiah the prophet" (II Chron. 12:15), "History of Jehu the son of Hanana" (II Chron. 20:34), "Vision of Isaiah the prophet" (II Chron. 32:32), "Book of the acts of

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Solomon" (I Kings 11:41), "Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite" (II Chron. 9:29), "History of Samuel the seer" and of "Gad the seer" (I Chron. 29:29), "Jeremiah's roll" (Jer. 36:14).

None of these old manuscripts are in existence at this time and probably were not at the time of the canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures. The possibility is that they may have been destroyed after the records they contained were copied and thus preserved in another form. Yet this is mere conjecture for they were referred to as to permanent records.

Careful reading of the text of Kings and Chronicles reveals that much of these books seems to fall into a system; an almost stereotyped framework of phrases at the beginning and ending of the record of each reign, within which the particulars of each successive reign are arranged. The writer records the principal events of the reign of a certain king and then refers his readers to some other source for additional information. In I Kings 11:41-43, the writer, after speaking of the events of the reign of King Solomon, closes by saying, "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead." We find similar notations fol-

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lowing the accounts of other reigns. Note the comment following the reign of Rehoboam (I Kings 14:29-31), also that of Jeroboam (I Kings 14:19-20). Again, at the close of King Asa's reign (I Kings 15:23-24); and again, of King Omri's (I Kings 16:25-28).

In the book of Second Chronicles, the writer gives the events of Solomon's reign and concludes (II Chron. 9:29-31), "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? And Solomon reigned over all Israel forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead." This indicates that the record of King Solomon was found in at least four different sources by those who eventually produced the records which we possess. The same is true of Rehoboam. The writer of Rehoboam's history in I Kings refers his readers to the "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah," while the writer of II Chronicles refers to two other sources (II Chron. 12:15-16). Take the paragraph concerning the reign of Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 20:31-34). This indicates at least one other redaction prior to the writing of our text; for after the writing of the "Book of the kings of Israel," the

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"History of Jehu the son of Hanana" has been inserted.

In the reference last given in the preceding paragraph, we find a fair example of the form quite frequently used in both Kings and Chronicles. The writer gives the name of the king, his age, the length of his reign, his mother's name, and a notation concerning the moral excellence of his administration. As another example of this form, refer to II Chron. 24: 1-3.

If we are to attempt to answer the question, "How did the Bible grow?" we must frankly say, it grew out of the experience of people, in their relationship to God, as men of deep conviction, amounting to inspiration, recorded such features of national history as seemed to them to have a bearing on religious growth and development. God had his part in it, of course; as he always has a part in shaping the course of those who attune their lives to his and allow him opportunity to influence them. One after another wrote, incorporating previous writings in their own, until eventually the records assumed a permanent form. Then the sifting process took place which decided which manuscripts to include in the canon and which to reject, until finally, the more or less sacred writings were printed and handed down to posterity.

From a consideration of these suggestive truths we shall readily understand that many old conclusions of the traditional viewpoint must be rejected

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or revised. We have not by any means outgrown the Old Testament, but we have outgrown that old theory of the Old Testament which accepted it from cover to cover as accurate history and the revealed word of God. Sanely viewed and interpreted, the Old Testament has great religious value and we may well commend the good judgment of those who saw fit to retain it as a part of the Christian sacred writings.

Originally, to write meant to engrave on wood or stone or clay. That was the original meaning of the term in both the Greek and the Hebrew. It also was the mode of handing down records by the Babylonians. But after the Hebrews formed their alphabet in Canaan, they learned to write with pen and ink on rolls of leather. In the process of time the ability to read and write became common, their pens being first reeds and later quills. Probably one of the first uses to be made of writing, was when some Hebrew bard or ballad singer wrote down his collection of songs as an aid to his memory.

Story telling must have been a fine art among a people whose traditions were handed down from father to son through successive generations. It must have been regarded as a day of great achievement when the new art of writing made it possible to reduce their stories to writing, thereby preserving them in permanent form.

CHAPTER VII

The Old Testament's Natural Divisions

IN the beginning we noted that the word Bible was taken from the Greek, "Ta Biblia," meaning "The Books." We should now note that the word "Testament" means covenant. In other words, we have the old covenant and the new covenant.

The books of the Old Testament are thirty-nine in number; and their natural classification in the order in which we find them arranged in the Bible is: I. Books of the Law, Genesis to Deuteronomy. II. Historical Books, Joshua to Esther. III. Poetical Books, Job to Song of Songs. IV. Prophetic Books, Isaiah to Malachi. It is to be understood, of course, that this classification is not in any sense chronological and neither can it be adhered to rigidly in a discussion of Old Testament literature and history.

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW

The first five books were, at the earliest date at which we hear of them, spoken of as the books of the law, or the law of Moses. Time was when it was thought that these books not only told of Moses but that he was their author and had given them sanc-

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tion as canonical books. Such a supposition was fairly reasonable on the part of those who had not entered into a real study of sources and conditions. Moses was the greatest figure in history at the time when Israel became a nation; and it was natural enough to ascribe to such a leader the writing of these books which contain both history and law. But later analytical study revealed the impossibility of their having come from Moses's day.

These books are called the Pentateuch and, as the books which contain the basic laws of a people, have been considered in their relation to each other. Modern Bible scholars have included Joshua and called these six books the Hexateuch, with the conviction that Joshua fits more naturally into this group than into the second, or the books of history. The inclusion of Joshua with the first five enables the reader to follow the fortunes of the people of Israel to their establishment in Canaan while still considering this original group. We also should recognize that Joshua's interests are inseparably connected with those of his fellows who came with him from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

In these books we find history and law mingled. The history purports to be the record of man from the time of creation to the establishment in Canaan; while the assembled laws presumably are those which have accumulated during those generations from the entrance into Canaan in approximately

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1450 B.C. to the time when the writings assumed permanent form many generations later.

On the historical side we already have taken a glimpse and we are now perhaps more interested in noting the development of their legal system. The laws embodied in this group of books relate to all the relationships of life and it would be impossible to think of them as attaining such fulness and importance until after their full establishment in Canaan and the creation of a written language.

Moses is called the law-giver but his laws are only basic. Their amplification into the elaborate codes which we find in Leviticus and other books doubtless was going on during those long centuries of development and change through which this people passed. The part which Moses played in the real writing of Scripture must have been very small indeed, though it is possible that some fragments may have come down from him and later been translated into Hebrew. Moses always is spoken of in the third person. One cannot even feel that the famous song of triumph in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, which was said to have been sung by Moses and the children of Israel after their escape from the Egyptians in crossing the Red Sea, was of Mosaic authorship.

The strong emphasis in this section was upon God's care over his people. He was ever seen leading and protecting them and even directing the forces of nature in such a manner as to contribute to

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their welfare. When in their flight from Egypt, pursued by the hosts of their oppressors, they found themselves cut off from flight by an arm of the sea (Exod. 14:21), Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea dry land and the waters were divided.

We must wonder sometimes why those who seem so anxious to find miracles in the Bible, and who do not hesitate to believe that God would ruthlessly violate his own great fixed laws of the universe, and who tell us that the waters receded at the word of Moses; I say, we must wonder why these people do not read this verse of Exodus and accept the truth it states.

They undoubtedly did right to give God the praise. We of these later generations might well pattern after them in this regard and concede to God a greater part in the affairs of life and its successes, regarding which we are so prone to congratulate ourselves on our own wisdom and business acumen. But the compilers of Exodus tell it simply and behold no miracle. It was the blowing of a strong east wind all night which so affected the depth of the water that it was possible for the Israelites to cross; probably not without wet feet, but without casualties. Then, when the wind ceased the waters returned to their former level. This natural phenomenon has been noted in these later generations.

Then in the third month they came to the wilder-

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ness of Sinai and camped before the mountain. And Moses went up unto God in the mountain, for this mountain was regarded as in a special sense the dwelling place of Jehovah. There amid fire and smoke, and with thūnder rolling overhead, as told in Exodus 19, Jehovah "came down." Moses restrained the people from going up lest, as he said, "many perish in the smoke and fire." And Moses brought down from the mountain his great code of laws, probably not amplified as we now have them in the book of Exodus, but simple statements of basic rules for man's relationship both to God and to his fellow men.

The Mosaic law has been buried almost out of sight by the multitude of ceremonial requirements which were added in later years. In justice to Moses, we must not lay those arduous and tiresome requirements of the ceremonial law which Christ frankly condemned at the door of the old law-giver. He uttered or carved but a few great principles which have been written into the foundations of the common law of the world. As given by Moses, we would have the simple statements without amplification :

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt make unto thee no molten gods.
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.
- IV. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

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VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

X. Thou shalt not covet.

One may question, why were there ten laws instead of nine or twelve? Probably the answer is, because there are ten fingers on two hands and they could be counted off on the fingers as an aid to memory. A careful reading of Exodus and Leviticus will reveal other similar sets of ten laws or ceremonial requirements.

The manner in which this Mosaic law, so simple in itself, was added to until it became the ceremonial law of the Jews in which tiresome details almost crowded out the spirit, is both natural and easily understood. It is practically duplicated in the experience of modern states and nations whose statute books become congested with laws whose very multiplicity make many of them dead letters.

The, so-called, laws of Moses, in their amplification, were the work of many men through many generations. Later law-codes were combined with earlier, and personal and historical narratives were appended, and the entire compilation credited to Moses. It was a natural enough procedure in days when writers were not so jealous of their rights of authorship and when the emoluments were lacking.

With the death of Moses and the assumption by Joshua of the mantle of leadership, preparations were made for the conquest of Canaan and the division of territory to the twelve tribes. These were

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the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob which had retained their family integrity during the years of Egyptian bondage.

According to the thirteenth chapter of Joshua, Moses had already given, or assigned, territory to the descendants of Reuben and Gad, afterward known as the Reubenites and Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. The descendants of Joseph had, for some reason, divided into two groups, headed respectively by Manasseh and Ephraim, so each must have his portion.

After the conquest of the land, Joshua and Eleazar the priest, assisted by the heads of the tribes, assigned by lot their portions to the nine and one-half tribes at that time unprovided for. The Levites, or the descendants of Levi, were assigned no territory for theirs was to be the Temple service and their subsistence would be provided for by the tithes which others paid into the treasury. Their government was a Theocracy, or a government direct from God through their priests.

GENESIS

The book of Genesis, as the title indicates, is the story of beginnings. The original Greek word signified origin or genealogy. It includes two great divisions of early history, the Primeval and the Patriarchal. The first, embracing chapters one to eleven, records the traditions of the nation without any adequate historic background; while the second pro-

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ceeds from Abraham onward, incorporating such fragments of history, both written and oral, as were available to the writer.

It is clearly a work of compilation and that of a late date, for it includes much data from the "P," or Priest-code, source which dates from a period at least as late as 444 B.C. From this post-Exilic vantage point, our unknown compiler looks to the early morning of existence and says, "In the beginning God." But he is not satisfied to stop there. He goes on to construct a cosmogony from the traditions which have been current among his people.

Those early chapters are full of the priestly influence for it is largely from this source that the compiler gets his ideas of sin and condemnation and the effects of evil. The writer feels very sure of God and of his influence in all the affairs of the nation.

The legends of Genesis; the Temptation and Fall, the Flood, the Murder of Abel, the Tower of Babel; all teach their lessons and are incorporated in the book not merely for the purpose of providing a suitable introduction for the patriarchal history which was to follow, but also to impress upon the reader the necessity of obedience and the certain unpleasant consequences of the failure to follow the divine leadership. It seemed fitting to discuss some of these legends briefly in the chapter on "Traditions and Old Beliefs."

As the writer follows the changing fortunes of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob down to and includ-

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ing the death of Joseph in Egypt, we must be impressed with the consistency of his religious motive. He clearly reveals his conviction that Jehovah has been directing all of the affairs of the nation, from the call of Abraham down to the famine in Canaan; and the chain of circumstances which, through Joseph, finally transferred the scene of action to the land of Goshen in Egypt.

The early narratives of Genesis are cast into a framework or scheme. Numerous genealogies appear and these begin, "These are the generations of ———," then follows the descendants of him who has been honored as the head of a family. After Abraham's entrance upon the scene of action in the twelfth chapter, and the beginning of a more dependable record, the narrative proceeds more smoothly. It lays no claim to information supernaturally provided, but records the evident conviction of the writer and the people of his day.

Limited discussions of the book of Genesis have been made in chapters II and III and therefore need not be repeated here.

EXODUS

The name of this book is also Greek. As the word indicates, it recounts the going forth, or the exodus, of the people of Israel from Egypt to the promised land, as Canaan was called. From the time that Jacob and his family removed to Egypt until Moses led his followers through the Red Sea on the return

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journey, was a period of more than two hundred years. They went into Egypt as a family; but they returned a people, numerous and aspiring, and needing only organization to become a nation.

The narrative of Exodus centers about the personality of Moses. It opens with a description of the conditions under which the people suffered at the time of his birth together with the fortuitous circumstances which caused his life to be preserved. Here, again, we find a divinely selected and prepared man passing through the experiences which fitted him to be a successful leader and deliverer of his people.

In order to get the complete picture in our minds, we must go back to the Patriarchs of Israel and read again from Genesis, chapters 37 to 47, the story of Jacob and his twelve sons; the jealousy of ten of them which led to the selling of Joseph to the traveling Ishmaelites, and his subsequent changeful life in Egypt, culminating in his being made next to the Pharaoh in power in order to lay by the surplus of fruitful years against the coming years of famine. Then follows the dramatic visit of Joseph's brothers to purchase grain and, subsequently, the removal of the entire family to Egypt where they dwelt in the section of country known as Goshen.

The opening chapters of Exodus carry us forward more than a hundred years to the point where the Israelites are suffering sorely at the hands of their Egyptian taskmasters. They are being persecuted to

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the extent that royal orders have been given to the effect that all male infants should be slain at birth. All are familiar with the manner in which the mother of Moses saved his life and of his adoption into the royal family by the daughter of the Pharaoh. Here he received his education and lived until he was forty years of age, when he left Egypt and went into Midian. There he later married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro (or Reuel), priest of Midian. Moses spent forty years in Midian and it was there, while herding the flocks of Jethro, that he received his commission from Jehovah to go back to Egypt and secure the liberation of his people.

Chapters one to eighteen recount the preparation of Moses; the various plagues visited upon the Egyptians; and the departure from Egypt, including the crossing of the Red Sea, the gathering of manna, and a visit to Jethro in Midian. Chapters nineteen to forty record the giving of the law at Sinai and the elaborate specifications for the building of an ark in which to keep the tablets of the law, and a tabernacle in which to worship. Then follows a description of the robes and decorations with which to dignify and make impressive the priestly office, together with the ceremonials of sacrifice.

The structure of the book is similar to that of Genesis and it probably dates from the same period. It was compiled from "P" and "J.E." in the same manner as that used in Genesis. The emphasis laid

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on the visitation of plagues upon the Egyptians and the institution of the feast of the Passover, celebrating the deliverance of the Hebrews from the final plague, speaks of the priestly influence and the growth of ritual prior to the writing of the book.

To what extent Moses and the laws which he promulgated may have been influenced by Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses's father-in-law; and the religious practices of the Midianites among whom he dwelt for forty years, we have no means of knowing. Of this, however, we may feel assured: he remained faithful to the ideal of God as shown through Abraham. Jehovah is their God and his laws must be obeyed.

LEVITICUS

The title of this book has reference to the Levitical, or priestly, regulations of which it is chiefly composed. While the Levites are mentioned only incidentally, the priests are frequently referred to and the ceremonial laws are laid down in such detail as to have made it a convenient handbook for them in the performance of their duties.

Leviticus comes to us from the priestly school of writers, "P.," and must be dated along with Genesis and Exodus in the late post-Exilic period. In form and contents it differs from them for its emphasis is on the forms of ceremonial worship and the duties of the priesthood. The keynote of the entire book

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seems to be, "ye shall be holy; for I, Jehovah your God, am holy." (Lev. 19:2.)

The twenty-seven chapters fall naturally into four divisions, each being discussed in its order: 1. The Law of Sacrifices, 1-7; 2. The Consecration of the Priesthood, 8-10; 3. The law of Clean and Unclean, affecting food, people, and houses, 11-16; 4. The Laws of Relation and Practice, 17-27. Some of these regulations are entered into with much detail. Many of those of the third and fourth sections are designed for the people in general.

Offerings and oblations were an important part of the religious practice of the day. Great emphasis was being laid upon the technicalities of formal and sacrificial worship. These things were the responsibility of the priests. All of the details must be made clear for the instruction of both priest and people. Ceremonial uncleanness might arise from various causes but, whatever the cause, the individual would remain unfit for worship or social intercourse until he submitted himself to the recognized procedure for ceremonial cleansing.

Leviticus has been called the literary monument of the Hebrew priesthood. Overshadowed in the earlier historic period by kings and prophets, and ignobly presented in portions of other writings, they here present their own case in a different light. Here we see them standing for a high standard of morality and for stately forms of worship.

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NUMBERS

The title of this book is given it in the "LXX" because of the two numberings which are recorded. It carries on the narrative of Moses and his followers to the fortieth year of the Exodus. In structure it resembles the book of Exodus and is made up, as are the others of this group, from fragments of history and laws which were assembled together by some compiler at a comparatively late date.

Some have asserted that the book of Numbers is a plain, monotonous chronicle of a rather uneventful camping expedition through the wilderness of Sinai. While there may be a large element of truth in such a statement, it would be grossly unfair to the facts if we failed to go much farther in our analysis.

This book covers practically all the years of the wilderness wanderings. It begins with the enumeration of the men of war by tribes and carries through to the recapitulation of their journeyings and the death of Aaron, as told in chapter thirty-three.

The number of men above twenty years of age was found to be 603,550 (1:46) exclusive of the Levites, who were not counted as they were set apart for the temple service. Their duties are defined in chapters 3, 4 and 18 of Exodus. Chapter twenty-six records another census, conducted in a manner similar to the former and presumably at the close of the forty years. This reports the number of men above twenty years of age to be 601,730. Those

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of the Levites who were numbered for the temple service were between the ages of thirty and fifty.

We shall be making a mistake if we pass lightly over the book of Numbers with the conviction that it contains only what its title indicates. Many things of real interest are recorded therein.

Rules for forming the encampment are given in chapter two, and of restitution for trespass in chapter five. Chapter six describes the qualifications of a "Nazarite," of which class of men the Bible mentions three, Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist. In chapter nine directions are given for the celebration of the Passover feast, and in chapter ten the order of march is laid down. Chapters thirteen and fourteen are full of interest as recounting the sending out of the spies and the condemnation of the discouraged group to wander in the wilderness for forty years.

An elaborate plan for the purification of the ceremonially unclean is detailed in chapter nineteen. This rite of purification by means of water mingled with the ashes of a red heifer also finds mention in other portions of the Old Testament. Some have thought that it was from this ceremonial that John the Baptist derived his idea of a water baptism as a type of cleansing from sin. A careful study of the use of water in Jewish ceremonial cleansings would seem to bear out this assumption.

Chapters twenty-two to twenty-five have to do with the relations of the Hebrews to the people of

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Moab and bring the interesting story of Baalam and his prophecies. In chapter twenty-seven Moses is warned of his approaching death and Joshua is designated as his successor by the laying on of hands. This is followed by a number of laws on various subjects and the story of an encounter with the Midianites.

The religious value of the book is not great, though possibly on a par with that of Exodus and Leviticus. The emphasis is on ceremonialism rather than idealism. This book probably dates from the same post-Exilic period as the others of this group.

DEUTERONOMY

The general style of Deuteronomy is quite different from that of the other books of this group, though its subject matter is much the same. It has been stated that three-fourths of the earlier codes are reproduced in some form in Deuteronomy. Thus it cannot furnish many new elements.

The name given to this book signifies "repetition of the law"; being, in its English form, the Greek word which conveys that meaning. Thus the title declares what its subject matter bears evidence to, that it is a restatement of material derived from already existing sources. None of its law codes make any claim to being new. Its quotations, like those of the other existing books of the law, were taken from earlier sources not now in existence.

The prevailing style of Deuteronomy is that of

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narrative and exhortation. This tone, which is quite evident through the earlier and later addresses, also pervades the legislative portions. It apparently is the work of a prophet or religious teacher rather than that of a statesman. He evidently seeks by a dramatic use of the last words of Moses to call his countrymen to a holier life and a purer service of Jehovah.

The date of Deuteronomy can be assigned with a fair degree of definiteness. If this be the Book of the Law which was found during the reign of King Josiah, then it must have been in existence in 621 B.C. for Josiah's reign began in 639 B.C. and the historic document was found in the eighteenth year of his reign.

The story, as told in II Kings 22:8ff., is an interesting one. While some repairs were being made in the Temple as a part of King Josiah's program of reform, a book, or roll, of laws was brought to light. Hilkiah the priest handed it to Shaphan the scribe saying, "I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah." Shaphan carried it to the king, who caused it to be read in his hearing, with the result that he was deeply impressed and took steps to make this book the fundamental law of the kingdom. There is no absolute certainty that this was indeed our book of Deuteronomy, though many scholars believe that it was essentially so. If so, it would fix the lower date. How much earlier than this it may have been written cannot be clearly

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shown. It is at least fair to assume that it was in existence during the reign of Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather, who died in 641 B.C.

Manasseh's attitude toward the established religion was such that it would have been a most wise and natural procedure on the part of the priests to hide the book of the law in the Temple in order to preserve it from destruction by the king. On the other side, it could scarcely have existed during the prophetic lives of Amos and Isaiah, approximately a hundred years earlier, else they would have been quite sure to mention it. We may safely place the date at about the middle of the seventh century B.C.

When Deuteronomy is viewed in the light of the age which gave it birth, its true significance appears. It laid down the lines of a great religious reform. It emphasized loyalty to Jehovah and repudiation of all false gods. The author seeks, by ever appealing to the most powerful motives, to stir Israel's heart to loyalty and devotion. Some may be inclined to call Deuteronomy a poor Bible. It would be so for our day, but it was a good one for the day in which it was given. It is rich in value if judged by an historic standard.

JOSHUA

This book bears the name of that warrior who had been closely associated with Moses and upon whom the mantle of authority rested after Moses's death. The Jews separate the book of Joshua from the Pentateuch and place it along with Judges, Sam-

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uel, and Kings to form a group of writings which they call the "Former Prophets." The literary structure of Joshua shows that it is intimately connected with the first five books and that it describes the final stage in the origins of the Hebrew nation.

With the death of Moses, Joshua assumed the active leadership of the wandering Hebrews and the book is the narrative of the conquest and settlement of Canaan. During that period of time in which Moses was credited with the authorship of the Pentateuch, Joshua was likewise regarded as the author of this book which bears his name. But the same reasons which demonstrated the impossibility of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch also preclude Joshua's writing of this book. The presence of "Priest-code" material in the composition of Joshua would indicate that its final redaction did not take place until a very late date; perhaps as late as the third century B.C.

Three general divisions of the book seem naturally to be made: 1. The Conquest of Canaan (chaps. 1-12). 2. The Partition of Canaan (chaps. 13-22). 3. Joshua's Farewell (chaps. 23, 24). The twelve chapters which tell of the conquest are a record of struggles and victories, the twelfth chapter consisting of a list of kings smitten by Joshua. The second section assigns to the twelve tribes their portions of the conquered territory. In the third section, chapters twenty-three and twenty-four purport to be the farewell address of Joshua. It is worthy of

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note that he does not speak like a warrior but as a man of God; and that he sets up a memorial stone at Shechem.

This book apparently assumed the form in which we have it by a series of stages. It is made up of a combination of materials from the different sources. Traces of all of them are to be found and Bible scholars find it somewhat difficult to separate and harmonize these elements.

Those who concern themselves with the miraculous in the Old Testament will be interested to note that when the Israelites were at war with the Amorites, Joshua caused the sun and the moon to stand still for "about a whole day" (Josh. 10:12-14). It is well also to note in this connection that the statement is quoted from the book of Jashar which probably was an ancient collection of poems on great events, battles, victories, etc., from which the later compilers made several quotations.

We are told in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible that the religious teaching of the book of Joshua is mainly found in its later strata, the Deuteronomic and the priestly. It is to these later compilers that we owe the fervent religious exhortations in those portions which are found most usable in preaching and teaching.

CHAPTER VIII

The Historical Books

THROUGH our study of the first group of books we are led to the close of Joshua's life and to that period of Israel's national history known as the period of the Judges. The book of Joshua may well be considered as the connecting link between these two groups of writings, and reasonable arguments may be put forth for classing that book with either group.

We are now ready to consider the, so-called, historical books of the Old Testament; Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

JUDGES

The book of Judges derives its name from those heroes whose exploits form its chief subject matter. They were called Judges because they judged Israel in the sense of defending the national cause against the enemies which sought to prey upon it.

After the death of Joshua there was no national leader and, without organization or leadership, the Hebrews were at the mercy of the surrounding tribes. Those were generations of struggle and warfare. In subduing Canaan, the native tribes had not been exterminated but were merely subjugated and still living in the midst. This made inevitable the war-

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ring of interests and nurtured those jealousies and differences which are bound to arise when those of opposing views mingle too freely together; and especially in an age when war is the only recognized means of arbitrament.

While all was peaceful and affairs were proceeding smoothly, they seemed to realize no need of civil organization or of leaders in their worldly affairs; but when some crisis neared or when some neighboring nation or tribe made war upon them, they needed a leader or organizer. Thus out of an evident need, judges, or deliverers, were raised up to organize the forces of Israel the better to repel those who sought to despoil them.

With the events recorded in the book of Judges, we receive a view of a distinct period of Hebrew history. We note in the first chapter that the author recounts in brief the conquest of Canaan which was told in greater detail in Joshua; but this writer speaks of that conquest as having been accomplished after the death of Joshua. It is just another one of the many evidences of compilation and of the fact that the different writers had no collusion. In fact, one probably was not aware that the other had written.

The religious emphasis of the book is clearly evidenced in the fact that their troubles almost always arose as the result of their failure to render obedience to Jehovah. They were continually beset with the temptations of idolatry. The "Baal" and other

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forms of idolatrous worship were freely practiced and it was but natural that this simple people, as yet not firmly fixed in their own forms of worship, should be inclined to adopt the customs of the people among whom they lived. This is clearly shown in chapter 2: 11-16, where they did evil and forsook Jehovah to worship idols; and Jehovah, in anger, delivered them into the hands of the spoilers.

If we carefully follow the fortunes of this people through the book of Judges, we must be impressed with the thought which seems uppermost in the mind of the writer. Time after time they did evil in the sight of Jehovah; and because of their evil doing, Jehovah delivered them over into the power of some marauding tribe. Sometimes the oppression was of short duration, while at others they were held as vassals for a period of years; sometimes as long as eighteen or twenty years. Then, when the rigors of serfdom pressed too sorely upon them, they would cry unto Jehovah and Jehovah would send a savior, or deliverer, in the shape of a judge who would lead them to victory over their enemies. Then would ensue a period of peace for a term of years, perhaps as many as forty or eighty years, until some other tribe would oppress and the experience be repeated.

By way of comparative chronology, let us say that the period of the judges in Israel extended from about 1397 to 1057 B.C., or approximately three hundred forty years. This does not accord with the chronology of the book itself as that would indicate

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that the period embraced was four hundred ten years. However, this would not be consistent with other computations. Some scholars express the belief that this period did not extend beyond a period of two hundred years.

The theory has been advanced that possibly the terms of some of the judges may have run synchronously and that this might account for the excess time, but there can be no certainty in such conjectures. It is more than likely that this is but another demonstration of the inaccuracy of statement of Hebrew historians.

The main section of the book, from 2:6 to 16:31, consists of an apparently consecutive narrative grouped around six principal judges: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson; together with references to six minor judges: Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. The record of Barak is identified with that of Deborah, while Abimelech, who is spoken of as "being prince" for three years, cannot properly be counted among the judges of Israel. Likewise, Eli and Samuel, who sometimes are numbered among the judges, should be classified as priests rather than as judges.

In the fifth chapter of Judges, we find a very old Hebrew poem called the Song of Deborah which deals with this period of history and celebrates the victory of Barak and Deborah. With the exception of some brief fragments of war songs, this probably is the oldest piece of writing in the Bible. Of this

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poem, Harold B. Hunting remarks, "It is a triumph song which is one of the most perfect compositions of its kind in literature."

The date of the final compilation of this book must be post-Exilic. The aim of the book is not merely to relate a number of wonderful tales of national heroes, but to enforce the lesson of God's providence taught in the experiences of the nation. Sin, punishment, repentance, and deliverance follow one another in logical sequence, and Jehovah's ear is ever open to the cry of his people. Its historical situations are presented from the religious viewpoint.

THE KINGDOM

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

The story of the kingdom in Israel runs through Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles but the books of Chronicles will not be considered here as they classify more definitely elsewhere.

The prophet Samuel, like the books which bear his name, serves as a connecting link between the judges and the kings of Israel. He has been called the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, and perhaps justly so; but more properly he was a priest.

Samuel did not come from priestly stock, but he had been dedicated by his mother to the service of Jehovah as a Nazarite. As a child of twelve years, he was placed in the Temple and "ministered unto Jehovah," being trained by Eli the priest. Samuel belonged to a transition period and it became his

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privilege to guide the nation from what may be called a theocratic-democracy to the establishment of a monarchy. The greater part of his life was given to this task.

The book of Samuel, for it is in reality but one book and is so printed in the Hebrew Bible, takes its name from this celebrated personality and covers a period of nearly one hundred years, from the birth of Samuel to the closing years of David.

As divided in our Bibles, the first book deals with the establishment of the monarchy and the fortunes of Saul, its first king. The second book follows the history of David up to the time of his declining years when death seemed imminent. It is worthy of mention in this connection that in the later period of Saul's reign as given in I Samuel, David and Samuel are fully as prominent as the king himself; while the first nine chapters of I Samuel are entirely devoted to the prophet-priest.

It is of interest to note how Israel came to have a king. The story is told in the eighth chapter of I Samuel. When Samuel was old, he wished to make his own sons judges over Israel, but they proved to be unworthy and the elders of Israel came in a body to ask that Samuel give them a king to reign over them even as other nations round about had kings. According to this chapter, Samuel was not pleased and regarded the request as an affront to Jehovah as well as to himself. As an argument against it, he pointed out to them that a king would prove to be

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an expensive luxury; taking their sons for his armies, their daughters for his service, and levying high taxes for the support of his court and its retainers. But still the people insisted until Jehovah told him to hearken to their demands and give them a king.

According to the ninth chapter, we have another version of the kingdom's establishment. In this account, evidently gleaned from another source, Jehovah had revealed to Samuel that a prince should be anointed to rule over his people and to save them from the Philistines. Furthermore, Jehovah would send to Samuel the man whom he was to anoint.

The next day, Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, came seeking his father's asses which had strayed from home. Saul was becoming discouraged in his search and was about to return home without the asses when his servant suggested that they were near the home of a certain seer, or prophet, who might be able to tell them where the asses could be found. They then went to the home of Samuel, carrying a present to pay him for his trouble. Samuel recognized Saul as the man whom Jehovah had sent and proceeded to anoint him king by the ceremonial of pouring oil upon his head. According to this account, the initiative toward the inauguration of the kingdom came from Jehovah and Samuel instead of through the demand of the people for a king.

We also have two interesting accounts of David's introduction to the court of Saul. Preceding both, is the story of Samuel's going, under the direction of

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Jehovah, to the home of Jesse, a citizen of Bethlehem, and selecting his youngest son, David, a comely shepherd boy, and anointing him as Israel's future king (I Sam. 16:1-13). The impelling motive for the selection of a successor to Saul had been the king's failure to smite the Amalekites with the severity which Samuel had commanded, as told in I Kings, 15.

According to I Sam. 16:14-23, David was a man of mature age, skillful as a harpist and also a man of valor and of war, who was first called to Saul's court to soothe with his playing the king's mental distress. He was afterward appointed the king's armor bearer.

A second account which must have formed an important part of the popular traditions of David is given in the seventeenth chapter. This is the well-known story of David and Goliath in which the youth won his entrance into the royal household through his prowess with a sling-shot. In this account he had no knowledge of war and was too young to accompany his brothers who were a part of Saul's army.

The book of II Samuel follows the reign of David and the struggles of the young monarchy, emphasizing the exploits and family experiences of the king. It was a time of wars and troubles and of moral defections through which David carried on and succeeded in setting up not merely a kingly form of government but a line of succession which endured to the close of the national history.

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The books of Samuel evidently are constructed with the thought of recording a connected history, but their literary features indicate the assembling of various materials probably belonging to different dates. There is clear evidence of both "J" and "E" materials with a final redaction by the Deuteronomic writers. The earlier sources probably date from the ninth century and the later from the eighth or seventh centuries B.C., with further revision under the Deuteronomic reforms.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS

The two books of Kings embrace the history of Israel from the period of David's nomination of Solomon as his successor to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the subsequent release of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon by Evil-Merodach. The division between the books of Samuel and of Kings is really an artificial one as the four together constitute one continuous history of the kingdom from its inception to its overthrow.

There are three natural divisions of the books of Kings. I Kings 1 to 11 deals with Solomon; I Kings 12 to II Kings 17 follows the history of the divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah; while II Kings 18 to 25 recounts the subsequent history of Judah.

The first division tells how the throne was secured for Solomon; the arrangements of his court; the death of David; his treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre,

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and the building of the Temple; Solomon's dedication of the Temple and the visit of the queen of Sheba; concluding with statements concerning his wives and the events which led to the division of the kingdom. The second section relates the parallel history of the two kingdoms down to the fall of Samaria, 722 B.C. It also includes the rather dramatic careers of Elijah and Elisha, those two prophets of the pre-prophetic age. Section three carries along the history of Judah to the time of the captivity.

As with all these other books, the final writing of the books of Kings was a matter of compilation which probably was carried forward in the Deuteronomic period. The writer refers freely to other existing sources of information which are discussed in chapter six.

The purpose of these books evidently is to show the growth and decay of the kingdom and to indicate the influences which controlled its history. They are written from the religious point of view and never lose sight of the fact that those who "do evil in the sight of Jehovah" will be speedily punished. They explain that the downfall of the northern kingdom was due to the setting up of shrines at other places than Jerusalem. This late compiler was more zealous and more nearly correct as a religionist than as an historian. Fortunately some earlier records were more concise.

If the purpose of all Biblical history is to teach

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religion, then we shall be quite willing to excuse the writer of Kings for the dullness of his historic sense for he sticks closely to his text as an expositor of the theory that "Jehovah will recompense." Doubtless we owe a debt of gratitude to this ancient chronicler of religious history who thus preserved national records and pointed out their religious significance.

CHAPTER IX

The Prophets at Their Task

WHEN we consider the prophets of Israel we are dealing with a very prominent group of people who played an important part in shaping the religious history of that nation and of the world.

It is an interesting process to familiarize ourselves with the prophetic books of the Old Testament and to get a mental vision of the prophets at their task; to place them in their proper setting and to visualize them in their relation to their age and their people. We can almost see Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Amos and Hosea and the rest of them, and almost hear their voices as they denounce sin and declare their conviction of Jehovah's attitude of wrath and repugnance toward all that is evil.

The actual period of Old Testament history known as the prophetic age was not very long; only about four centuries, from the eighth to the fourth centuries before Christ. During that time, the men whose acts and words form the subject matter of the fifteen prophetic books included in the Old Testament lived their lives and exercised their ministry. Yet we shall not receive full vision of the prophets and their work unless we go back of that and consider those other men who exercised the prophetic

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function during the period of Judges and the earlier kings.

We must remember that those great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, have not been honored by being made the heroes of books, though both surely exerted a great influence on the life of their day and still occupy a large place in the picture of early prophetic activity. Before their time, both David and Samuel, particularly the latter, exercised all the functions of prophets. As we read the early history of the kingdom, we find frequent mention of prophets and their work.

In order to realize a comprehensive view of this class of men as a whole, we must consider not only those later prophets who lived and wrote just prior to, during, and at the close of the Captivity; but also those earlier seers who exerted a powerful influence on the life of their own day though they left no writings for posterity.

Our study of Judges, Kings, and Chronicles must demonstrate that prophecy had a strong influence on the life of the nation. Schools of the prophets are spoken of; and groups of those old-time seers evidently were associated together. One such group, apparently under the leadership of Samuel, is mentioned in I Sam. 19:18-24. Other groups were at Bethel (II Kings 2:3), and at Jericho (II Kings 2:5-7), and at Gilgal (II Kings 4:38).

Saul, as well as Samuel and David, must be classed among these early seers of Israel. After Samuel had

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anointed Saul as king and when Saul had turned to go away, it is written (I Sam. 10:9-13), "God gave him another heart," and when he met a group of prophets, "the Spirit of God came mightily upon him" and he also prophesied. Then the people remarked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" It has been suggested that perhaps they considered it worthy of note and somewhat peculiar that a sane and solid individual like Saul should join himself to a group of ranting enthusiasts. Perhaps a fairer explanation of their wonderment might be their reluctance to think of Saul as being dominated by the divine Spirit.

According to A. B. Davidson in his article on prophets in *Hastings Bible Dictionary*, "In early times, God was conceived more as a natural than as a spiritual force; his operation, even when he might operate on the ethical side of a man's nature, was physical. Hence 'spirit' connotes suddenness and violence. When one is seen performing what is beyond man to do, or what is beyond himself in his natural condition; both to himself and to the onlooker, he appears to be not himself, but another personality; he is seized and borne onward by a power external to himself—the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. The man on whom the Spirit comes oftener performs deeds than speaks words." These statements seem to apply very literally to the early seers.

In our thinking, we must differentiate between the

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earlier and the later prophets. Samuel and Saul and Elijah and Elisha cannot fairly be regarded as in the same class with Amos and Isaiah and those others of their later day.

There was but little difference between the Hebrew prophets of those early years and the same class of men in other nations, for those other nations had their prophets as well as did the Hebrews. The greater number of those early prophets were of the wild, emotional, ecstatic type, given to simple life and possessing strange mannerisms. They might be compared to the whirling dervishes of Mohammedan countries who, through music and dancing, work themselves into a state of great excitement, uttering wild cries and sometimes gashing themselves with knives. In this condition, it is believed that they are possessed by some spirit or deity.

We must be careful not to idealize these prophets too completely. They had their living to earn and it appears that many of them earned it as professional soothsayers. Their activities were varied and they always were found very close to the real life of their people. They aided in detecting criminals, and in finding lost property; in settling civil disputes, and in telling when crops should be sown. People came to them for advice regarding love affairs, proposed journeys, and business ventures. They were asked whether or not war should be waged, and if so, by what tactics it should be carried on. Taken by and large, the Old Testament prophet was, as the Scotch

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dominie put it, "A man of many pairts," but his outstanding office was to lead the nation upward toward truer life.

Those early prophets sometimes disagreed which would indicate that they were not always to be regarded as true mouth-pieces of Jehovah. When Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, were considering war against the king of Syria, Jehoshaphat suggested that they first determine the will of Jehovah. Accordingly Ahab, king of Israel, assembled a group of four hundred prophets and asked their advice (I Kings 22). They told him, "Go up against Ramoth Gilead to battle for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied that their advice was sound and he asked if there were no other prophets to whom they could go. Ahab said yes, there was another prophet, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, but he didn't like Micaiah for he never prophesied as he wanted him to. But they sent for Micaiah, and when he came, he disagreed with the four hundred other prophets and said, "Jehovah hath put a lying spirit into the mouths of all these, thy prophets" (I Kings 22:23).

The incident marks the contrast between true and false prophecy in that early day. The false prophets relied on the consent of numbers and shaped their message in a manner pleasing to the royal desire. Micaiah represented the true prophetic attitude of

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fearlessness and the intention to follow the leading of Jehovah's will.

Concerning the characteristics of those early seers, it is worthy of mention by way of illustration that when Elijah came down from Mount Carmel after making some weather observations at the time of a prolonged drought, he told King Ahab that rain would soon come to break the drought; and when the heavens grew black with clouds and the wind blew, and when Ahab drove his chariot in haste back to Jezreel, Elijah girded himself and ran before the king all the way (I Kings 18:41-45), a wild, fantastic figure, quite different from the prophets of the period of the Exile. Yet Elijah stood as a connecting link between the old and the newer period of Old Testament development so far as prophecy was concerned.

Elijah may be called the first prophet of Israel on a grand scale. He was one of the most impressive figures of the Old Testament. Tradition has sketched his record with so much of the unusual that he towers far above both his predecessors and his contemporaries. King Ahab's defection to the Baal worship of his wife, Jezebel, gave Elijah the text for his most severe denunciation of the king as he cried to him and his assembled subjects (I Kings 18:21), "How long do ye hesitate between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." His zealous soul demanded that false worship

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be laid aside and Jehovah be given an undivided allegiance.

The actual prophetic period after the days of Elijah and his successor, Elisha, began about 750 B.C. Just before, during, and near the close of the Babylonian Exile, came an age in which prophecy flourished. This was the age above all others when writers were numerous and prolific. In this age, a new dignity attached itself to the prophetic office by virtue of its new character. These new prophets were not fortune tellers but preachers. They were not, like so many of their predecessors, wild or crude or emotional. Their utterances were not delivered while in a condition of ecstasy or trance. They spoke thoughtfully and sensibly, plainly telling their fellows, and particularly their rulers, that Jehovah was not pleased with their manner of living. If they were living to-day, they would be called reformers; trying to make the world a better place in which to live.

Prophets have been regarded as a higher type of men and are commonly thought of as possessing some supernatural power and the ability to foretell events. Commonly speaking, the idea of prophecy is linked up with the belief in supernaturalism; the thought that the prophet speaks with authority because he is the mouthpiece of God.

The prophets have been called seers, wise men, the servants of God. These doubtless are fair terms to apply to the prophetic office. They spoke in figures and parables and word pictures in much the same

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fashion as the prophets of our modern day who desire to convey truth and make it live in the minds of their hearers. Their writings may well be called the highest expression of Old Testament literary art; as Dean Farrar said, "The crown and flower of Old Testament writings."

As idealists, they marched at the head of the procession of those who sought better things, yet they were not infallible. They proclaimed what they believed to be the will of God and couched their declarations in such language as to indicate that God spoke through them; yet at best, they were only men and their message could only be what they believed to be the will of God. They might easily be mistaken at times. Then, as now, when a man assumes to prophesy, the human element must be taken into consideration; for a man's interpretation of God and his will is always colored by his own background and training as well as his own desires and natural conclusions.

The probable fact concerning the prophet is that he was more the religious idealist than the foreteller of events to come. He made no attempt to look into the misty future and to foretell happenings beyond the limits of the age in which he lived. Those who attempt to find in modern wars, or inventions, or political crises the fulfillment of prophecy; are reading into those writings a significance of which the prophets themselves never dreamed. The prophet was always a man of his own time, speaking to the

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people of his own time and age concerning events of the present or consequences which he believed would be realized in the near future.

The prophets were, in reality, far-seeing and discerning men; careful observers of the conditions with which they were surrounded in the social, political, and economic world. Their analytical minds were capable of understanding what must be the logical results of a certain course of action. These results constituted the theme of the greater part of their utterances. Like men of to-day who are worthy to become national leaders, they possessed a wide grasp of affairs and the ability to analyze the trend of events. Knowing conditions, they did not hesitate to warn their contemporaries of the sure consequences which would follow wrong doing of every kind.

William Gladstone once defined an orator as a speaker who stands over against his audience as a mountain stands over against the sea, condensing what comes up from his audience in mist or vapor or cloud, into refreshing streams of speech. So may we think of any popular speaker who senses the unformed conceptions moving in the spirit of his age and gives them such utterance that his voice becomes the voice of his times. This undoubtedly was true of the prophets, but some of them went even farther than that.

Amos set the ideal of God's righteousness over against the actual statesmanship of the nations of his

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day. Isaiah set the universality of God's care over against the narrow hundred per cent nationalism of the Jews. Hosea set the thought of the divine tenderness toward Israel over against Israel's wanton unfaithfulness. The prophet is no mere fault finder but a man with his soul on fire for righteousness and determined by some means to develop that righteousness in the field of life.

The prophets of Israel spoke under what may be called a divine imperative, but not in the sense of supernatural illumination. It was, rather, a conviction of necessity so strong and impelling that they could not contain themselves in silence. Glazebrook says, "A man who feels that all his world is going wrong; who sees authority in the hands of weakness, wealth triumphant over worth, justice perverted to be the instrument of oppression, worship a cloak for debauchery, and faith an excuse for political blindness, may well determine to protest in speech or writing against the evils of his time." In fact, he cannot hold his peace if he is worthy to be called the representative of God or an exponent of civic righteousness.

The Books of the Prophets, like the Epistles of the New Testament, are not chronologically arranged in our Bibles. If there can be said to be any order in their arrangement, it must be on the basis of the size of the books. These fifteen books are divided into two groups called the Major Prophets

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and the Minor Prophets. In speaking of the natural divisions of the Old Testament we noted that the group of prophetic books consisted of seventeen books. That classification includes Lamentations and Daniel which should not properly be considered as prophetic books. Their exclusion leaves fifteen; three Major Prophets and twelve Minor Prophets.

CHAPTER X

The Major Prophets

THE Major Prophets probably are so called not so much because of the superior importance of their writings as on account of the length of their messages. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are books which cover much territory and many years and probably have been more largely quoted than any other portions of the Old Testament. Undoubtedly their subject matter fully justifies the term of major, or greater.

ISAIAH

The prophet Isaiah probably may justly be described as the greatest of the prophets, though not the earliest. Both Amos and Hosea appeared upon the scene of prophetic activity before Isaiah, but their messages were directed to the northern kingdom while Isaiah directed his message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. George Adam Smith says of Isaiah, "He was greatest by the strength of his personality, the wisdom of his statesmanship, the almost unaided service which he rendered to Judah in the greatest crisis of her history, the purity and grandeur of his style, and the influence he exerted on subsequent prophecy."

Those were both stirring and ominous years in

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which Isaiah grew to manhood in Jerusalem. They were the closing years of the reign of King Uzziah who was rated as wise and upright. As he saw it, grave danger menaced his beloved nation. Uzziah was growing old while the probability of trouble with aggressive Assyria seemed to be growing greater. If the good King Uzziah is not able to hold the people in loyalty to Jehovah, what may happen under the rule of his successor? Surely a voice is needed to call the nation to righteousness. This, in brief, seemed the imperative which led him to assume the prophetic office.

In chapter six Isaiah gives in impressive language the source of his call to speak. The headings which appear at the beginning of the first and second chapters have been written by the compilers, but this call to prophesy in the opening verses of the sixth chapter is from Isaiah himself. It is the result of a vision which fired his soul. He stands among the crowd of worshipers on this day at the close of the Temple service and is impressed with the superficiality of it all. As he stands and meditates, the scene before his eyes changes. He no longer sees the Temple with its decorations and appointments. He no longer hears the chanting of the Temple singers. He receives a vision of the glory of Jehovah and hears a voice which "shakes the foundations of the thresholds." Isaiah states that he felt at first his own unworthiness to be a messenger of Jehovah, but finally was convinced and responded, "Here am I; send me."

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Isaiah gives the date of his prophetic call as the year in which King Uzziah died which was 740 B.C. His work extends from that time to the period of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 B.C., or a period of about forty years. This statement has to do with the first thirty-nine chapters, known as First Isaiah. Beginning with Uzziah, his life work includes the period covered by the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah.

On the basis of modern scholarship, this book falls into three natural divisions, created by its subject matter and made necessary by the dates involved in the events which they mention. These divisions are known as First, Second, and Third Isaiah; or First, Deutero, and Trito Isaiah. As stated above, First Isaiah includes the messages of the great prophet as given from 740 to 700 B.C. together with notations and additions by the later compilers. Second Isaiah is by some writer near the close of the Captivity, probably from 550 to 538 B.C. Third Isaiah must date from about the time when the final compilation was made and certain evidences would place it as late as 460 to 445 B.C.

Of the thirty-nine chapters which constitute First Isaiah, probably a large portion consists of the actual messages of the prophet himself. He was the son of Amoz, a citizen of Jerusalem, and so far as we know, always remained there. We know nothing of his last days. The legend that he suffered martyr-

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dom at an advanced age seems not to be well founded.

This first section, or the book of First Isaiah, consists largely of independent pieces, sometimes furnished with special headings. The first twelve chapters constitute a more or less related whole with a formal introduction and conclusion. Chapters thirteen to twenty-seven consist of doom songs or elegies describing in anticipation the fall of different cities and nations. The prophet appears to be a close observer of history and deals with Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, and others. Chapters twenty-eight to thirty-five comprise a section which seems to be a separate work, treating of the crisis before Sennacherib's invasion. Chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine seem to constitute an historical appendix, being taken (with the exception of Hezekiah's psalm, 38:9-20) from the second book of Kings.

Isaiah's prophecies are not merely predictions of what is to be but also judgments of what should be. They set up for Israel a new standard by which the government of a state may be measured and valued. He was forward looking and placed his ideal in the future and not in the past. His was no thought of a golden age in the world's misty morning, but of a time to come when God's will shall be done. The power of his genius appears in his sudden contrasts and figures of speech. He seems to have a keen con-

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sciousness of Jehovah's presence. From first to last, he denounces sin and speaks of coming doom.

Deutero, or the Second Isaiah, chapters forty to fifty-five, is broadly distinguished from the first part both in literary form and subject matter. It makes no claim to be by Isaiah. This section is written by someone who is with the exiles in Babylon and looking forward with ardent hope to the time when they shall be restored. One is at once impressed with the different tone of this writer. Instead of a message of doom, his is a message of hope. Deliverance is near; "comfort ye, comfort ye, my people" (40: 1f.). After reading the stern condemnation and threats of doom from Isaiah of Jerusalem, the opening words of Deutero-Isaiah are as a breath from a new world.

In chapter forty-four, verse twenty-eight, he mentions Cyrus who issued the edict permitting the return of the exiles. It may be well to remember in this connection that the Jews went into exile in two detachments; the flower of the nation with Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. and the remainder after the revolt of Zedekiah in 587 B.C., when Jerusalem was taken and the Temple destroyed. They also returned in two groups; the first in 538 B.C. and the second in 522 B.C. The date of this writing would be about 540 B.C. or just prior to their return.

As this author is a writer instead of an orator, his message is addressed not to some individual or some specific group, but in general to all the world of his day. Condemnation gives way to consolation. From

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beginning to end, he promises peace to Israel, neither imposing conditions nor demanding repentance. He holds that the people already have "received double for all their sins." He seeks to win them by demonstrating Jehovah's power and majesty.

One may question how this author came to travel so far from the conceptions of the earlier prophets, and why he came to have sympathy for those millions who worshipped other gods. Probably it was because he lived in their midst and realized that they were fellow men. He seems to recognize that great principle of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God when he cries, "Turn ye unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (45:22), and "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye, buy and eat" (55:1). To him Jehovah is the transcendent God, dwelling in heaven and looking down on all the world with the eyes of a Father as he orders all things in accordance with his plan and purpose.

Trito-Isaiah, or the third division of the book of Isaiah, is a division which has not yet been accepted by all Bible scholars, but one which it seems extremely reasonable to make. Many careful Bible students now believe that the last eleven chapters could not have been written by the same author who wrote chapters forty to fifty-five. The end of chapter fifty-five seems to mark a division between two documents which are strikingly different in many ways.

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While the author of chapters forty to fifty-five is in exile with his people, sharing their anxieties and assuring them of the imminence of restoration to their beloved Jerusalem; the author of chapters fifty-six to sixty-six lived in Jerusalem. Instead of expressing the hope and conviction that they may soon return, he thinks of welcoming other exiles who will come to enlarge the number of those already in Jerusalem. In one portion (62: 10f.) he gives a picture, not of Jehovah making a road across the desert for the return of the first captives, but of the inhabitants of Jerusalem marching out to meet fresh bands and of preparing the way as they go. Cheyne and Duhm are among those who accept this view which would place the date of these eleven chapters in the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, or somewhere between 460 and 445 B.C.

The sixty-first chapter is for the Third Isaiah what the fortieth chapter is for the Second Isaiah and chapter six for the First Isaiah. In these chapters each describes his divine commission and gives the essence of his message. This third portion may all have been written by a single author or it may have been of composite origin. Cheyne believes that it may have come from a group of writers. The historical situations which are pictured are the largest factors in deciding these questions of scholarship. In order to pass upon them intelligently, one must read more widely than is possible for the average Bible student.

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JEREMIAH

The prophet Jeremiah was of priestly descent, being described as the son of Hilkiah who lived at Anathoth, a little community of priests in the tribe of Benjamin not far north from Jerusalem. He exercised his prophetic office during those trying years just preceding and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem. His career extended over about forty years, from about 626 to 586 B.C.

Jeremiah is the fifth of the great prophets to speak, having been preceded by Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. His contemporaries in the prophetic office were Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. He doubtless had read the writings of his predecessors and may have been influenced by them. He could easily see that the evils which they condemned were still flourishing and this may have influenced him to take up their work and to proclaim a similar message. It was Jeremiah's lot to prophesy when all things in Judah were rushing down to final catastrophe, for the first deportation came in 597 B.C.

While still young, he received the prophetic call in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (1:2). This young priest came up from Anathoth trembling and afraid (1:6), "Oh, Lord Jehovah, behold I know not how to speak; for I am a child." It is quite possible that, being young, he did not at once enter into his active ministry for he still remained in his native village (29:27). However, this seeming retirement

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may be due to the fact that his messages were written while his predecessors had spoken orally. Jeremiah marks the transition from the speaking to the writing prophets, this becoming complete in Ezekiel.

It was five years after his first public appearance that the Book of the Law was found by Hilkiyah in the Temple, 621 B.C. Whether or not this priestly finder of the law should be identified with the father of Jeremiah it is impossible to determine.

We are told in chapter thirty-six that Jeremiah's first prophecies were reduced to writing in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, or 604 B.C., when Jeremiah caused his faithful secretary, Baruch the scribe, to take the roll and write as he dictated. This was supposed to be the message which Jehovah had spoken through him "against Israel and Judah."

In the following year, in the ninth month (36:9ff.), Baruch read the contents of the roll publicly before the people at the gate leading into the upper court of the Temple. Jehoiakim, being informed by his princes of what Baruch was doing, directed that they should bring the roll and read it before him. This was done and when the king had heard the first few leaves he became angry, cut it with his knife, and threw it into the fire. When this action became known to Jeremiah, he directed Baruch to take another roll and rewrite it. This was done, Baruch writing as Jeremiah dictated. This second manuscript evidently contained not only what was burned but other addresses as well. This roll

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probably formed the nucleus of our present book of Jeremiah.

Baruch undoubtedly is to be thanked for the preservation of the addresses of Jeremiah and it is thought that he was the real author of the book. Only a small part was produced by the prophet himself, yet all is related to him and to his times. The biography of Jeremiah, if we may apply that term to this book, was compiled after the death of the prophet by someone, possibly Baruch, who assembled together the fragments of his oracles from the original roll and other existing sources, and made them into a single roll.

The natural divisions of the book are: 1. Prophecies relating to the kingdom of Judah (chaps. 1-45). 2. Discourses directed against foreign nations (chaps. 46-51). 3. An historical appendix on the siege and capture of Jerusalem (chap. 52). His work extended over the reigning period of five kings—Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. His prophecies were called forth by the historic events of which he was a critical observer.

Like many others of the world's great men, Jeremiah was not highly esteemed during his lifetime. The kings refused to accept his advice (37:2) and he was thrown into prison (37:15, 16), where he remained many days. Later on he was carried to Egypt with those who fled thither (43:6, 7) and, according to tradition, stoned to death in that country. But in later years his spirit breathed out on men

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and they felt its beauty and greatness. Images from the scenes of his life and echoes of his words fill many of the Psalms whose authors strove to be like him in his faith. No prophet had a more thankless task than his and none was more true to his thankless ministry.

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel is our chief authority for the first half of the Exile. One of the Temple priests in his early life, he was taken to Babylon with Jehoiachin in the first deportation in 597 B.C. Five years later his prophetic work began (1:2) and continued for a period of twenty-two years, from 592-570 B.C.; the latest date in his book being the "seven and twentieth year" of his sojourn in Babylonia (29:17). This was sixteen years after Jeremiah had been taken to Egypt.

The Jews in captivity were not prisoners, but were permitted to live together in small villages, supporting themselves by farming and commerce. Naturally enough, Ezekiel was a member of one of these communities, called Tel-abib and located near the banks of the River Chebar (1:1, 3, 15). This river probably was a canal or a tributary of the Euphrates in the vicinity of Babylon. The life of this colony is dimly reflected in the pages of the book. They seem to have been in fairly comfortable circumstances, partly self-governing, and forming a little world of their own. They cherished an abiding

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interest in the affairs of Jerusalem with which they seem to have been constantly in touch.

The first deportation of Judeans to Babylon consisted of the nobility, the men of war, and the craftsmen. This we learn from II Kings 24: 14-17. Ezekiel himself must have been included because of his social position in the upper ranks of the priesthood, who formed a part of the aristocracy of Jerusalem. This may account, at least in part, for his familiarity with conditions and his understanding of those events which led eventually to the overthrow of the Hebrew state.

The book of Ezekiel consists of three sections, dealing with three different subjects: 1. The approaching fall of Jerusalem (chaps. 1-24); 2. Prophecies concerning foreign nations (chaps. 25-32); 3. Israel's future restoration (chaps. 33-48). It is the most voluminous book of all the prophetic group and its structure is such that it does not present as many subjects for critical analysis as are found in other writings, particularly in Jeremiah.

From his exile home, Ezekiel watched the toils closing about Jerusalem and declared in symbolism and imagery the approaching fall of that city and the ruin of ancient Israel. He was at first a herald of judgment, calling his fellow-exiles a rebellious people and combating their hope that they soon might return to Jerusalem. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, and when he realized how heavy the hearts of his countrymen really were, his tone

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changed. He then set himself to the task of dispensing courage and hope. They needed something to live for and to look forward to, and he insisted with great earnestness that some day Jehovah surely would bring them back to their own land and re-establish its former glory.

Ezekiel was an unusual writer and from an unusual viewpoint. Having been a priest in Jerusalem in his early life and later a prophet in Babylon, he was a combination of those two types, authority and inspiration, which usually are opposed. Probably this dual influence is responsible for the character of some of his visions. In chapter 8:7ff. he sees a vision of the abominations which are carried on within the Temple court, and in chapter ten the vision is shaped and embellished by the presence of the cherubim which were a part of the decorations of the Temple in Jerusalem.

This prophet never lost sight of the religious values nor neglected his priestly allegiance toward Jehovah and the things of worship. It was natural enough that many of those who had inclined toward foreign religions in their own country should go entirely over to them when they found themselves in the new surroundings of the Exile. Many of the Israelites deserted their faith and were merged with the heathen, but their idolatries could not influence him.

In the third section of the book, he is looking forward with high desire to the time when Israel shall

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be restored and the Temple worship re-established. In chapters forty to forty-seven he recounts in great detail his vision of the rebuilding of the Temple with a full set of plans and specifications for the same. In chapter forty-seven he sees great streams of refreshing influence going forth from the Temple to the nations round about.

Ezekiel was the first to recognize and assert the importance of individual responsibility. While united as a nation in their own land, their religion, with its blessings and reproofs, was regarded from the national rather than the individual viewpoint. Now that their national integrity is disrupted, it is natural that this view should change. He points it with real meaning for the individual when he says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (18:4, 3:16-21).

Ezekiel calls himself a watchman over the house of Israel (3:17) and seems to feel himself a real shepherd to these exiled people. In him we receive our first glimpse of that watchful, pastoral solicitude which savors of the attitude of Christ toward men. He feels a sense of responsibility for his fellows.

CHAPTER XI

The Minor Prophets

THE group of books known as the Minor Prophets was formerly grouped with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and known as the Latter Prophets to distinguish them from the Earlier Prophets, which title was given to Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, now known to us as the Historical Writings. These twelve books are called the minor prophets on account of their size rather than the importance of their subject matter. The fact that they are so called should not affect our respect for them for Amos and Hosea were two of the greatest of the prophets of Israel.

The Jewish name for these books is "The Twelve" and they were taken together and written on one roll. There are great differences of opinion as to the dates of some of these books; and their arrangement in our Bibles is not that of their chronological order, but the same as that of the Hebrew canon. The order of their discussion here is that of their probable chronological order. Different men doubtless had a share in the final redaction of these writings as later editors made their additions to the earlier manuscripts.

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AMOS

Amos was the first of the prophets in this real prophetic period. We are told in the opening words of the book that he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel; and that it was two years before the earthquake. A conservative date to assign and one pretty well agreed upon places him at 760 to 746 B.C.

Amos had been trained in a stern school which did not make for softness or patience with the conditions which he saw about him. His home was in the town of Tekoa on the edge of the Judean desert, about twelve miles to the southward from Jerusalem. It was a wild, rugged country from which even a shepherd would find it difficult to wrest a livelihood.

"The men of Tekoa looked out upon a desolate and haggard world. South, west, and north a range of limestone hills—on the north the great towers of Jerusalem could be seen. Eastward the country is open, but desolate. The land slopes away for eighteen miles and goes down to a depth of four thousand feet. Below Tekoa there is no settled life. The land is green in spring, but brown the rest of the year. The country is a wilderness, practically deserted by day and inhabited by wild beasts at night. In the distance is a range of desolate hills by the Dead Sea, glimpses of which may be seen. It is

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an empty and silent world where the sun moves in majesty by day and the stars by night."

In his statement of motives (7:14, 15), Amos denied being a prophet or of prophetic lineage, but "I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees, and Jehovah took me from following the flock and said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.'"

As a wool gatherer, Amos made yearly journeys to the market towns to the northward. There he would see the town life and the worship of the sanctuaries as well as have an opportunity to note the manner of life of those who were in a position to live at ease. No doubt Samaria was one of the chief markets which he visited. It was a great city in his day; with shrines for the worship of the gods, much luxury and unlimited dissipation. Though a native of the South, he prophesied in the northern kingdom of which Samaria was the capital.

The time in which Amos prophesied was one of great prosperity in both kingdoms and he saw things which stirred him to the depths. Israel's moral condition proved such a shock to his sense of right and justice, that it lured him forth from the security of his pastoral surroundings to beard the lion of unrighteousness in the capital of the northern kingdom. Nothing less than a compelling conviction could have provided incentive for such a task.

He saw the insolence of the rich, and the oppression of the poor; he saw callous luxury, shameless debauchery, and drunken revelries; he saw extor-

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tion, greed, bribery, perverted justice, hard usury, false measures, and ruthless severity to debtors; the rich lolling on beds of ivory and covered with rich tapestries, while their unfortunate brethren craved the necessities of life. His zealous soul could not witness these things in silence. Stung to wrath by pity and a sense of stern justice, he poured forth his soul in that condemnation which conditions seemed to merit.

Amos was a preacher of righteousness and doom was his word. His reasoning was to the effect that because right was right and God was God conditions must not be allowed to remain as they were. He was but a peasant and yet he did not hesitate to reprove kings and condemn aristocrats.

In his first two chapters he describes how, because of their sins, Jehovah will visit penalty upon Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab; and just as surely must Judah and Israel pay the penalty. In chapter seven he pictures Jehovah with a plumb-line in his hand testing and measuring Israel as a bowing wall; and he cries (7:9), "The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

Amos was stern and unyielding in his sense of justice. Had he spoken after the Captivity, he would have traced it to moral causes. He was a preacher to the conscience but not a preacher of repentance. As between love and law, he was a prophet of law.

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The sins of the people so filled his vision that he found but little place for love. He implores the people to seek Jehovah and live (5:4-6). While they continue to sin, Jehovah will hate their feasts and take no delight in their solemn assemblies (5:21). Only one thing will suffice, "Let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream" (5:24).

HOSEA

Hosea was the second of the great prophets and a close successor of Amos. We are told in the opening verse that he was the son of Beerī who lived in the northern kingdom. His activities were coincident with the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and with that of Jeroboam, king of Israel; but could scarcely have continued during the full reigning period of those kings. King Jeroboam died in 749 B.C. which must have been very near to the beginning of Hosea's ministry. As he does not mention the deportation of Israelites in 734 B.C. or the accession of Pekah to the throne of Israel in 736 B.C., his work must have closed before that time. It would seem that a fair date to assign to him would be 750 to 736 B.C.

Hosea was the only prophet who was a native of the North. He, like Amos before him, sees the utter corruption of his country and its leaders. He knows it better than Amos, a citizen of the southern kingdom, could have opportunity to know it; and he realizes that such a state of corruption can end only

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in dissolution. Page after page of the prophet's utterances ring with denunciation of the evils which exist. Drunkenness and harlotry and vileness of every sort are rife; the signs of moral decay are everywhere to be seen (4: 11, 7: 16). Both the king and the priests are involved. All Israel is unfaithful. Because the priests are guilty, the people lack knowledge. Whoredom and drunkenness follow the worship of false gods. Of what avail are mere sacrifices when not accompanied by real worship?

Yet Hosea's message is not all one of condemnation. He is an exponent of the power of forgiving love and sees that quality as the highest element in religion. In this respect he stands in marked contrast to Amos, being more tender and having in his program of justice a place for redemption. His confidence in the unfailing love of Jehovah is supreme and his appeal to the unfaithful nation is that they return to their God who will take them back in spite of their shame and degradation.

There has been much difference of opinion concerning the literary style of Hosea. Some regard the book as an allegory or symbolic representation of Israel's unfaithfulness to Jehovah and the consequences which it entailed. Others believe that he was symbolizing his own unfortunate marital experience as he laid bare a chapter of his own home life to point a lesson for the benefit of his people. If so, it was a sordid chapter which most men would have refused to reveal. Personally, I find myself unable

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to accept this literal interpretation; though it is the one most commonly accepted by modern scholars. Rather, I see Hosea as an author possessing imagination and literary skill who manufactures his symbolic story with the hope of bringing Israel back to God.

In the three opening chapters of this book, the first of which is written in the third person, the picture is painted of Hosea marrying a woman who proves unfaithful. Gomer, the wife, bears him children but they are the children of another. Finally she leaves him and goes her way and, like the prodigal of the parable, sinks lower and lower into the gulf of shame and disloyalty until she is placed on the open market to be sold as a slave. Hosea finds her there and buys her back though he cannot take her into his home in the same standing as before (3:3) until she proves herself worthy.

This is a sad picture of unfaithfulness and sin. It seems unbelievable that even a Hebrew prophet would make such a revelation of his own actual family experiences in order to point a moral for his hearers. Just why it has been so interpreted is somewhat difficult to understand. As symbolism, with which the people of his day were entirely familiar, those first three chapters become merely a literary production as the vehicle through which he presents the unfaithfulness of Israel. As such, it becomes a powerful and dramatic presentation of Israel as the unfaithful spouse of Jehovah.

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The symbolic interpretation is borne out by the fact that the names given to the children also are symbolic and evidently are created for the purpose of pointing a lesson. "Jezreel" recalls a deed of blood in the past history of Israel while "Lo-ruhamah" and "Lo-ammi" have a purely objective reference to the impending fate of the nation. However, the teachings of the book would remain the same whether we suppose the marriage to be real or parabolical.

Hosea introduces an element of which Amos made no mention. Hosea is a preacher of repentance and the forgiving love of Jehovah. If a man's love can be deep enough to take back an unfaithful wife, how eternal must that of Jehovah be! Even in his direst threatenings the prophet breaks off into tender entreaty (6: 1-3), and concludes (chaps. 12-14) with the final triumph of divine love. In the last chapter he makes a powerful appeal and promises for Jehovah (vss. 4, 5), "I will heal their backsliding," "I will be as dew unto Israel."

MICAH

The book of Micah begins with almost the same opening description as that found in Hosea and Isaiah. This probably was a later addition. It informs us that Micah was a Morashtite, which means that he was a native of Moresheth, a dependency of Gath in Judah. He was a contemporary of Isaiah and prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz,

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and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, speaking both to Samaria and Jerusalem.

Micah evidently was a man of the common people for his denunciations were reserved for the aristocrats who took by violence the things they coveted. He sympathized with the peasantry in their sufferings and attacked the wrongs to which they were exposed. He said of the powerful (2:2), "They covet fields and seize them; and houses, and take them away." He did not hesitate to speak his mind concerning the rulers of Israel (3:1-3, 9, 10), for his soul rebelled against the injustice which his people were compelled to suffer at the hands of their leaders. He may well be called the prophet of the poor.

Micah began his prophetic work before the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. as indicated in chapter 1:3-5 and, if the title be correct as given in the first verse, he began to prophesy during the reign of Jotham in Judah, who died in 735 B.C. Therefore we shall be justified in placing the date of this prophet from about 736 B.C. and onwards. The lower date would be more difficult to fix.

Critical scholarship experiences some difficulty with this book as the evidence seems clear that it could not all have come from Micah or from his day. Evidently the redactors must be responsible for the inclusion of some later material though, in the main, it may be taken as the prophet's own message.

The book falls naturally into two parts, chapters

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1-5 and 6-7, both of which deal with varied subjects, being summaries of utterances given on different occasions. Much of it is written in the form of dramatic dialogue. This is particularly true of the sixth and seventh chapters. In chapter 6:1-5, Jehovah speaks to the people; in verses six and seven the people respond; while in verse eight the writer applies the lesson, "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Much of this dialogue may be traced throughout the book.

In chapter 4:1-5, he paints a strong picture of better days to come when the will of Jehovah shall be done and wars shall cease. Chapter 5:2-4 expresses clearly the Messianic hope, this probably being one of the later additions. Micah's activities and utterances were not of a political nature. He aims, rather, at moral reformation.

ZEPHANIAH

Nothing is known of the personality of Zephaniah except the brief statement contained in the title. According to this, he is a descendant, in the fourth generation, of Hezekiah; and he spoke in the days of Josiah, king of Judah. We cannot be certain as to whether or not his ancestor, Hezekiah, was the former king of that name; but many have the conviction that such was the case. One argument for this belief being the fact that Zephaniah's genealogy is carried back four generations to Hezekiah, while

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the usual practice in the case of the prophets is to name only the father.

Since Zephaniah's activities took place during the reign of Josiah, his date must fall somewhere between 639-608 B.C. It also must have been prior to the finding of the Book of the Law in 621 B.C. Many arguments are brought forth by technical scholarship to sustain both an earlier and a later date, but a fair one to ascribe in view of all the arguments would seem to be about 626 B.C. On the basis of this date, Zephaniah and Jeremiah would have begun their work in the same year.

Zephaniah opens his prophecy with an announcement of destruction apparently directed to the entire world (1:2, 3, 18), but particularly to the unfaithful in Judah and Jerusalem. The great "day of Jehovah" (meaning the time when Jehovah will assert himself) is at hand. It will be a day of wrath and distress when neither silver nor gold shall purchase deliverance and Jehovah will make an end of all that dwell in the land (1:14-18). In chapter two the prophet urges his people to repent and thus to escape the threatened doom which surely will overtake the Philistines, and Moab and Ammon, and Ethiopia, and Nineveh. It is a stern judgment against evil, almost universal in its scope. From the royal house downwards, all classes are guilty and shall share in the terrors of "that day."

In the third chapter he designates more definitely those upon whom these woes are to descend. The

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princes and the judges and the prophets and the priests all will be included along with the nations and the assembled kingdoms (3:8). These judgments are intended to chasten Israel and, after she has learned her lesson, those who survive will serve Jehovah "with one consent" (3:9). The purified "remnant of Israel" (vs. 13) will "take refuge in the name of Jehovah" and "none shall make them afraid." So the prophet bids his people rejoice that they shall be freed from their judgments and their enemies and again hold an honorable position among the nations of the earth.

NAHUM

Little of the history of the prophet Nahum is known. He is spoken of as Nahum the Elkoshite, which would identify him as a native of Elkosh though no such place can be located in historical Judah. As a prophet, he arose in Judah at about the same time as Jeremiah and Zephaniah and wrote at a time when the fall of Nineveh seemed imminent. There has been much difference of opinion as to the proper date to assign to his writings; the suggested dates ranging from 630 to 607 B.C., the latter date being that of the fall of Nineveh. A fair consensus of opinion may justify us in assuming that he prophesied about 608 B.C.

The theme of this prophecy is the fall of Nineveh and the three chapters are orderly stages in a connected whole. His writing is full of power and fire

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and is more poetic than prophetic. He describes the doom of Nineveh in such vivid language as to convince one that he knew whereof he spoke.

In chapter 1:2-6, Nahum depicts the appearance of Jehovah in judgment and its effects upon the physical universe; then he describes the irretrievable destruction destined to overtake the Assyian capital. As though in a vision, or as one who actually saw, he describes the assault upon Nineveh with flashing chariots and reddening shields; nobles stumbling as they march, and the palace dissolved (chap. 2). It is a graphic description, showing the besiegers and the besieged and ending with a taunting proverb against what had been a den of lions (vs. 11-13).

In chapter three we are given to understand that Nineveh's ruin is brought about because of her cruelty and avarice. Jehovah is against her. He will expose her in shame to the eyes of the world and avenging horsemen will bring destruction upon her. There will be none to comfort or to bewail her and she will be helpless to avert her doom. In the hands of Nahum, Assyria becomes an object lesson to the nations of the world, teaching as an eternal principle that righteousness—personal, civil, and national—alone exalteth a nation.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk was a prophet of "woe" whose prophecies seem naturally to follow those of Nahum. That prophet foretold the destruction of

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Nineveh which took place in 607 B.C. Internal evidence would indicate that Habakkuk delivered his message at some time during the reign of Jehoiakim (608-597 B.C.). The exact date is difficult to fix, but probably a safe approximate date, on the basis of related historical events, would be from 605 to 600 B.C., near the beginning of the Chaldean supremacy.

Nothing is known with certainty concerning Habakkuk's personal history. There is a tradition that he was of a Levitical family though this is not very well sustained. At least, he was a citizen of Judah and deeply interested in finding out what God meant by permitting tyranny and wrong. He attacks sin and grapples with the problems of life. He has individuality as evidenced by his style and tone.

The book opens with a dialogue between the prophet and his God, in which he expostulates with Jehovah for permitting the reign of lawlessness and injustice in Judah to pass unchecked. Jehovah makes answer (1:5-11) that the Chaldeans will be the instrument of Justice. They will come with violence and "gather captives as the sand." But the prophet questions if this would not be wrong upon a still greater scale. In the second chapter Habakkuk imagines himself in his prophetic watch-tower waiting for Jehovah's message. It comes with oracular impressiveness (2:4), "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith."

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In chapter 2:5-20, the prophet bursts forth into a taunting parable of five woes directed against the great world power, the Chaldeans. At the close of the last woe, he passes to the thought of Jehovah in his holy temple before whom all the earth must stand in reverent silence. Chapter three is a lyric ode called the prayer of Habakkuk, which represents Jehovah as appearing in judgment and executing vengeance on his nation's foes.

The third chapter is quite different from the other two. Though called in the title a prayer, it is more in the nature of an ode, having a certain sublimity and force in which Jehovah appears to deliver his people from pestilence and foes. The author closes with a declaration of his confidence in Jehovah who will insure the salvation of his people.

Habakkuk is stern enough to desire that judgment be completed and yet he prays that Jehovah will "in wrath remember mercy" (3:2). Some of the internal evidence of this chapter leads many students to regard it as an unconnected ode, taken from some liturgical collection and placed here by a compiler. The presence of the musical notation, "Selah," would serve to strengthen this view.

HAGGAI

The name "Haggai" means "the Festal" and probably indicates that he was born on some Jewish feast day. We find no question concerning the date of Haggai's prophecy. He spoke in the second year

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of the reign of Darius, king of Persia, or in 520 B.C. According to the title, his message was directed to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the high priest.

The prophecies are arranged in four groups, each headed by the date on which it was delivered. They cover a period of four months, from September to December of 520 B.C.

The chief point of interest in the mind of Haggai is the rebuilding of the Temple. The Jewish exiles had returned from Babylon in 536 B.C. and the sixteen years which had elapsed had witnessed no successful effort toward the rebuilding of their national sanctuary. This was not satisfactory to the prophet and he now came forward with the divine command to start at once the work of rebuilding. He addressed his message to Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and religious leaders of the community, with the result that the work was taken vigorously in hand. Four years later, 516 B.C., the renewed Temple was re-dedicated.

Haggai had been greatly impressed by the failure of his people to rebuild at an earlier date. He reminded the leaders that they were living in comfortable homes themselves (1:4) while the house of Jehovah was lying waste. He saw this neglect as the cause of the misfortunes from which they had suffered. Drought and the failure of crops were the evidences of divine displeasure.

In his third address, delivered four weeks after

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the work had started, Haggai gave words of encouragement to the builders (2:3-9) that they should not compare it unfavorably with the previous structure, assuring them that the later glory of Jehovah's house would exceed that of the former.

In most ways, Haggai belongs to the new school of prophecy, following the Exile. The bitter denunciation of the pre-Exilic days no longer seems necessary. The tendencies toward apostasy and idolatry now have largely disappeared and his main interest is centered in the Temple. He and his contemporaries now turn their minds toward the things of worship and its visible expression.

This prophet's style shows little ornamentation. He speaks simply and plainly, urging his people to meet a practical problem. When the work is under way and he feels assured that it will be carried through to completion, he assures them that better days will follow: the seed is in the barn, it shall yield a harvest; the vines shall yield their wine and oil; God's blessing shall descend upon his land.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was a close contemporary of Haggai and prophesied for the same purpose. In this book, like that of Haggai, the dates of the separate prophecies are given with the day of the month and the year. It was the second year of Darius, king of Persia, or 520 B.C. The title of chapter seven indicates that its message dates from the fourth year of

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Darius which would mean that Zechariah's ministry extended over a period of at least two years.

The prophet is described as the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo; and Iddo was one of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zechariah must have been born in Babylonia. The book of Ezra mentions a Zechariah, son of Iddo, as co-operating with Haggai to induce the people to prosecute the task of rebuilding the Temple.

This book consists of two parts, evidently quite different from each other. Chapters one to eight are known as the genuine prophecies of Zechariah and the titles clearly attribute them to him; but chapters nine to fourteen apparently belong to a different date, while their style would brand them as from a different author. The former is a series of visions whose dates are given; while the latter is a group of prophecies of very different character whose dates are difficult to determine.

Chapters one to eight record eight symbolical visions, all designed for the encouragement of the Temple builders. These are preceded by a brief exhortation to repentance (1:1-6), emphasized by a reference to their forefathers who had suffered because of their failure to heed the warnings of "former prophets." The significant features of each vision are pointed out by an angel. They express Zechariah's hopes for the future.

The chief subject in the mind of the prophet seems to be that of the coming Messiah; and an in-

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dispensable condition to the entrance of that era is the rebuilding of Jehovah's house. When the glory of Jehovah once more fills the Temple the distresses of the times will come to an end. All of the visions turn upon the Messianic expectations of that day. It has been stated that from this book one can form a rather complete picture of the Messianic hopes at that time entertained.

The first vision (1:8-17) was that of men on horses of different colors, the messengers of Jehovah, who report that all is quiet in the world. Haggai had promised that Jehovah would shake all nations; but the world was not being shaken and no political movement was on foot to restore the glory of Jerusalem. The second (1:18-21) was of four horns, symbolizing the nations opposed to Israel, but whose strength is broken by four smiths. Vision number three (chap. 2) is of an angel with a measuring line defining the limits of the new city. The old city would be too small for its inhabitants. The new one will not be restricted by a wall for other nations will be included and Jehovah will be both her wall and her glory. In the fourth vision (chap. 3), the high priest, Joshua, appears before Jehovah laden with the people's sins. He is accused by his adversary, Satan, but is acquitted, reclothed with rich apparel, and given the promise that the "Branch" will be sent (v. 8). The fifth vision (chap. 4) is that of a golden lamp in the Temple, representing the restored community, which receives its oil from the

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two olive trees, Zerubbabel and Joshua, who are the channels of temporal and spiritual power. In vision number six (5:1-4), he saw a flying roll to symbolize that the penalty of sin will fall upon him who is guilty. In the seventh vision (5:5-11), the angel shows him a large vessel, called an ephah, in which Israel's guilt, personified as a woman, is placed that it may be carried away to Shinar in Babylonia. The eighth vision (6:1-8) is of four chariots with horses of different colors, going as the four winds, to execute the judgments of Jehovah throughout the earth. These are followed by the statement that the "Branch," the true builder of the Temple, shall be their priest and rule upon his throne.

In chapters seven and eight, written, according to the title, two years later; he makes his appeal to his people for righteous life and brotherly relations (see 8:16, 17). In 7:8-14, he rehearses the reasons why their fathers were sent into the Captivity. Now the need of fasting is ended. Their fasts shall be turned into occasions of rejoicing for Jehovah has returned to bless his people and to dwell in Jerusalem.

The second section, chapters nine to fourteen, is quite different and implies different conditions. Two distinct prophecies are found here (chaps. 9-11 and 12-14). These doubtless are the production of another author or authors, and have been appended by the redactors. It is even possible that they may have been written by someone of the same name, for Zechariah was a common name at that time.

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In 9:9-10, the writer sees the coming of Messiah to bless the world with peace. In chapter ten the people are exhorted to seek blessings from Jehovah rather than from the teraphim. Jehovah will save his people and strengthen them. In chapters twelve and thirteen there is described a gathering of the nations against Jerusalem and their overthrow; the idols shall be removed from the land (13:2) and Jehovah will give to his people the spirit of grace and supplication (12:10). In chapter fourteen there is visioned great blessing: the Messianic age commences with Jehovah standing upon the Mount of Olives (vs. 4). He shall be king over all the earth (vs. 9). All nations shall come to Jerusalem to worship (vs. 16), while streams of living waters shall issue forth (vs. 8) continually toward the east and toward the west.

MALACHI

Nothing is known of the prophet Malachi and no title is given to the book which would indicate anything concerning him. The name Malachi means "my messenger" or "my angel." It is thought possible that the real name of the prophet was forgotten or unknown and that the suggestion of the name came from the first verse. The Septuagint translators render (Mal. 1:1), "The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his angel." If Malachi was a real personality, at least no fact of his life is recorded and the name is used no place

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else in the Bible. The prophet, whether he was named Malachi or not, evidently was a priest or had very close relations with the priesthood.

The book was written at some time between the completion of the Temple in 516 B.C. and the arrival of Ezra in 458 B.C.; though some have thought of it as being written after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, possibly at as late a period as 420 B.C. A consensus of opinion seems to indicate that he was dealing with evils which existed in the post-Exilic Jewish community before the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and that he probably wrote about 460 B.C.

With the establishment of the priests after the completion of the Temple, the responsibility for the moral welfare of the nation devolved upon them. The high enthusiasm of those first years after the return and their establishment in a new Temple had passed, and even the priests themselves needed to be spurred to more zealous service. This task the prophet undertook.

Malachi's denunciations are an indication of the deep-seated evils which prevailed in his day. Real faith and genuine moral character are at a low ebb, affecting even the priests, and he becomes an eager defender of purity of worship. It was a time of depression and discontent. The expectations aroused by earlier prophets had not been realized and some of them had begun to doubt the divine justice. This

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prophet seeks to recall them to moral and religious earnestness and the purity of public worship.

On the part of the priests, they offer to Jehovah what they would not presume to offer to the governor (1:7, 8); the table of Jehovah is polluted (vs. 12) and crippled beasts are brought for sacrifice (vss. 13, 14). The people have neglected the payment of tithes and, as a result, have been visited by drought, locusts, and crop failures (3:7-12). They have divorced their own wives and contracted marriage with foreigners (2:11-14); they complain that it is in vain to serve Jehovah (3:13, 14).

This book expresses many of the principles and much of the spirit of the ancient Hebrew seer. The writer judges the times in much the same manner as did Ezra and Nehemiah. He is no formalist for he breathes the genuine prophetic spirit. He highly values the principles for which he stands and is ready to lend his whole influence to maintain them.

JOEL

The title of this book gives no information as to its date or the prophet's personal history. It merely mentions his name and that of his father, Pethuel. In such a case, we can only look for internal evidence and this is meager. He mentions neither Assyria nor Babylonia and he pictures no historic situation which might be interpreted as an indication of the probable date.

The natural inference would be that Joel lived in

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or near Jerusalem after the Exile, though some very divergent views have been held; some dating the book as early as 850 B.C. Other considerations make it seem that he wrote at least later than the Exile, several of the most discriminating scholars dating him along with Ezra and Nehemiah in about 444 B.C. On the supposition of this late date, the powers of Assyria and Babylonia had come to an end and Jerusalem was under the rule of priests with a regular Temple service.

Joel does not charge his people with civil or national sins as previous prophets had done. There is no mention of a struggle between the righteous and the unrighteous in Israel, nor between idolaters and the worshipers of Jehovah. His message is a call to repentance and a promise of blessing. He believes in the certain reward of the righteous and the sure punishment of the wicked.

Joel finds motive for his prophecy in a plague of locusts accompanied by a severe drought, and the calamities naturally caused by them. Food failed for man and beast (1:10ff.); and it was impossible to bring the daily offerings to the Temple (1:9, 13). He sees existing conditions as an indication that the "Day of Jehovah" is at hand. They must prepare for that day by fasting and mourning and supplication.

Then follows the message of reassurance (2:18ff.); they are given the promise that their calamities will disappear; the divine spirit will be

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poured out on all flesh; and then shall come "the great and terrible day of Jehovah" (vs. 31); "Who-soever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered" (vs. 32); "Jehovah will be a refuge unto his people and a stronghold to the children of Israel" (3:16).

OBADIAH

The little book of Obadiah is the smallest in the Old Testament but it has provided a great test for the skill of the critics. The name means "the servant of Jehovah" but absolutely nothing of the personality of the author is known. The effort to determine its date has caused it to be tossed from one century into another by successive critics until there exists in their estimates of its date a difference of nearly three hundred years.

The opening verses of Obadiah so strongly resemble a passage in Jeremiah (Jer. 49:7-16) as to make it seem almost certain that a common origin must be assigned to them. On the basis of this portion, some have been convinced that Obadiah and Jeremiah were contemporaries and have assigned his prophecy to the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, 604 B.C. However, further evidences of later material would lead to the conclusion that those opening verses (1-9) were merely taken from a common source with those of Jeremiah, and that the real date of Obadiah must be placed not only after the Exile but after the return was completed. Nowack

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postulates the date of 432 B.C. which probably is a fair conclusion for the adherents of the late date.

Obadiah is concerned entirely with Edom, the land of the descendants of Esau. There was ever a feeling of bitterness between Edom and Israel, harkening back to the traditions involving the twin sons of the patriarch Isaac. The two nations were neighbors with bitter memories and rival interests. The Edomites, located in a highly productive area, enjoyed a prosperity far above that of the tribes which swarmed upon the surrounding deserts.

Obadiah brings no spiritual message. His chief desire is to see Edom brought low. This must be accomplished no matter how high she may attempt to mount (vs. 4). Jehovah will destroy the wise and the mighty out of Edom (vs. 8, 9) because of the violence done to Israel (vs. 10). Edom must suffer as she has made others suffer (vs. 15) because the "day of Jehovah" is at hand. Edom shall be destroyed (vs. 18) and Israel and her children shall take possession of all.

JONAH

This little book stands in a class all by itself. It is not written in the form of prophecy but of narrative, being devoted to a description of a particular incident in the prophet's life. It could not be considered in a strict sense a prophetic production, but belongs more properly among the literary books. It has a distinct lesson to impart which stands out clearly

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regardless of our solution of the literary problem.

The book does not profess to be written by Jonah himself, nor even by an eye witness of his adventures or even a contemporary of the prophet. He is spoken of in the third person and Nineveh is mentioned as no longer in existence. That city fell and was practically destroyed in 607 B.C. We learn from II Kings 14:25 that Jonah, the son of Amitai, was a native of Gath-hepher and a prophet in the northern kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II, who began to reign in 790 B.C. No doubt the materials for the narrative were supplied by tradition. Those who adhere to the belief in a late date, which seems well proven by the language of the book, would place the writing at about 300 B.C., though some would make it even later.

There are those who still argue for the historicity of the narrative and the events which it recounts. Others see it as a parabolic story intended to impress the need of fearless obedience to the commands of Jehovah. When we interpret this story as parable or allegory, the reference to the fish becomes less repugnant. Popular mythology would make such a story something to be expected by those to whom it was addressed. When a prophet wants to make an impressive illustration of what Jehovah can do, it is quite natural that he should make use of his writer's license and cause Jehovah to create a great fish.

This story needs no analysis in detail. Its plot is simple. Jonah, commissioned to proclaim at Nineveh

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Jehovah's judgment against that great city, seeks to evade responsibility by fleeing by ship to Tarshish in the far West. It is noteworthy that the loyal devotion of the heathen seamen is placed in apparent intentional contrast with the behavior of the prophet. The sailors, feeling sure that someone on board is the cause of the storm, cast lots to discover who it is. When the lot falls upon Jonah he consents to be cast into the sea. Then the sea becomes calm.

After Jonah has been saved from the sea by the fish, he again receives the command to go to Nineveh. This time he proceeds thither and proclaims the city's overthrow. Wonderful to relate, the strange preacher had cried his warning to only a third of the city (3:3-4), when the whole of Nineveh proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, even the king participating in this expression of humility (3:6) with the hope that God would turn away his anger (vs. 9) and the city be saved. When Jehovah repented (vs. 10) and Nineveh was spared, Jonah was disappointed. It was a blow to his vanity that his prophecy had not been fulfilled.

The writer of the book of Jonah evidently is a satirist who seeks to hold up the prophets to ridicule. He is thinking of a class of prophets who are more interested in having their forecasts fulfilled than in having their warnings heeded. The whole episode must be taken as emblematic and as indicating that such a prophet as Jonah could not be tolerated, even by whales; so he is spewed out after three days.

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Those who have read the story of Jonah and the whale and who have accepted it as a miracle, have looked with distrust on those who interpret it as a moral figure; while those who have regarded it as a moral figure, have derided those who believe in it as a miracle. Both groups might well set aside their prejudices and concentrate upon learning the great lessons of divine love and patience, as well as human tolerance, which the book really teaches.

This really is a remarkable book, full of impressive lessons of tolerance, of pity, of the impossibility of fleeing from God, and the sureness of his just retributions. Its object is to teach these great lessons concerning God and the relationship of his people to him. The author recounts these dramatic experiences with the hope that they may serve as salutary lessons to other people who may be tempted to evade the responsibilities of life. Obedience must be rendered even though it involves self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER XII

The Poetic and Wisdom Literature

THE poetic and wisdom literature forms a very important part of the Old Testament. If it were taken away, that which remained would be prosy and lacking in vital heart interest. It is the common custom to think of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs as of the same general style. In the old Hebrew canon they were classed together and provided with special accents for musical use. There probably is equally sufficient reason for including the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations under this heading; but they usually are considered as a part of the "Five Rolls" and will be discussed in a succeeding chapter.

In the Old Testament there are found three main channels of revelation—priests, prophets, and wise men. The sages lived side by side with the priests and prophets and shared with them the confidence of the public. As found here, "wisdom" and "poesy" bear much the same earmarks. The wise men have sometimes been identified with the early scribes. We probably should differentiate between these two classes of literature in our thinking, but it is difficult to express just how and where the work of the one leaves off and the other begins.

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When we speak of Hebrew poetry, we are speaking of something quite different from those effusions and studied rhymes which bear the name of poetry in our modern day. Modern poetry possesses rhyme, rhythm, and meter, but these elements or their absence seem not to be important to the Hebrew poet. Possibly these things are only a matter of custom after all, and the Hebrews might have been quite contemptuous of twentieth century poetic art had it preceded theirs. No sharp distinctions can be drawn between the prose and the poetical books of the Old Testament.

The Hebrew poet repeats the same idea in different words, or sometimes he combines different ideas within the same form of words. He is likely to reiterate the thought. Their poems were sung or recited to the accompaniment of music and dancing. Their songs had a purpose, being declamatory, or laudatory, or recounting some event.

Some Hebrew poetry may well be likened to modern futuristic art, much of which, the most of us will agree, needs to be labeled in order that it may be recognized as art. At any rate, considered from the viewpoint of modern standards, Hebrew poetry is fearfully and wonderfully made. But, laying our modern criticisms aside and taking these writings at their face value, they seemed to meet the needs of the people of that day and to express the emotions, and longings, and deepest feelings of their lives.

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Among the ancient Hebrews, poetry was distinguished from prose partly by the character of the thought it expressed and partly by its diction, but especially by its rhythm. Rhyme and meter did not mean so much to them. Parallelism is a better term—the adaptation of lines of approximately the same length, combined in groups of two or three or four lines. The most common form of Hebrew verse is the couplet of two lines, the second reinforcing or completing the thought of the first. Or two parallel clauses may be used in a similar way:

“A wise son maketh a glad father,
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”
(Prov. 10: 1)

Among all nations, the earliest manifestations of the poetic instinct are found in folk-songs; which are just one form of expression through the medium of which the folk-lore tales are handed down from father to son. Folk-songs may express emotions of various sorts; they may recite traditions or merely inspire unity of action. Through song as a medium, people may develop within themselves the ambition for work, the courage for war, the zeal for worship, or those other tender or neighborly feelings which govern in their touch with human kind.

The songs of battle, of victory, and of conquest form an important part of Old Testament literature; while those of confidence in the overruling power of a divine Being show themselves in some

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manner in nearly every one of the books. The folk-songs and other poetic productions were not inspired by literary ambition and probably were not composed with the painstaking deliberation of some modern bard. They expressed the natural and more or less spontaneous emotions which stirred their hearts.

Music or, more exactly speaking, rhythm has ever appealed to the deeper side of man's nature. Psalm or hymn singing is a natural part of religious expression. Israel was a race which took delight in warfare and they lived in an age when the Golden Rule, if they had one, had no application to other nations than their own. Their strength of arm was their right to possession, and their fires of conquest or of defense were fanned by the stirring strains of some battle song. Victory was hailed with songs of triumph.

The poets proper always claimed to be inspired and their speech would be considered as the utterance of a higher being. They saw themselves as the voices of a speaking deity. The peculiar rhythm and measure of their prophetic speech was produced by the higher Being. This poetic inclination is more noticeable in the writings of the later than of the earlier prophets. The most of them were, at least to some extent, also poets and used forms of poetic rhythm.

The Old Testament poets thought more and deeper than of rhyme and meter. They spoke and

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wrote as men fired with a message from the living God and their poetic effusions were the natural overflow of their feelings and convictions. The vital spring of poetry is emotion. If it is genuine, it comes from the heart and goes to the heart. One cannot effectively write poetry if he does not feel it. The belief in God of the sages is unquestioning, their trust in him calm and sure. The wise man may find the divine nature and procedure a mystery, but he has no doubts as to the divine character and power.

As a whole, Hebrew poetry is remarkable for its wealth of imagery. It is luxuriant with figures and daring in its boldness. It thrills with every emotion which moves the deep fountains of the writer's heart. Hate and love and despair and hope and condemnation all have their place and make their contribution to the expression of his thought. But through it all the religious urge is ever present and the poet's confidence in Jehovah is unfailing.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job belongs to the class of wisdom literature and deals intimately with a problem of human life. Formerly this book was regarded as an historical statement, but that view is no longer held by serious and thoughtful scholars. However, there probably is an historical, or at least a traditional, basis of fact on which it rests. In the opening verse, we read, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job"; but this does not tell us much. In

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Ezek. 14:14, we at least have proof that such a man was known, and it is fair to assume that the traditions concerning him contained some of those elements which are contained in the book.

Needless to say, the book was not written by Job nor in the age in which he lived. During those days in which it was regarded as literal narrative, it was supposed to date from the patriarchal age; but since it has become necessary to deny its historicity, we are free to look for internal evidences which may aid in determining its date. The range of a century earlier or later than the Exile would be sufficient to include all but the most extreme of modern critics. In view of all the arguments which have been brought forth, we shall not go far wrong in placing the probable date of composition at about 400 B.C.

The various interpreters have differed widely in their conclusions concerning the book of Job. According to some scholars, it is an epic; to others, a drama; and to others, a didactic poem. If we are to consider it as a dramatic poem in the form of a dialogue, it may well be regarded as a masterpiece of its day. It is one of the few pieces of literature approaching drama among the writings of the Hebrews. It combines together humor, irony, imagination, and an understanding of human nature; constructing its situations and pointing its lessons with dramatic skill. The unknown author must have been an earnest, pious man of a high ethical standard and possessing great sympathy with those in distress.

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The book is systematically laid out, having (1) a prologue written in prose (chaps. 1 and 2), together with Job's lament (chap. 3); (2) a series of colloquies between Job and his friends: first colloquy (chaps. 4-14), second colloquy (chaps. 15-21), third colloquy (chaps. 22-31); (3) the intervention of Elihu (chaps. 32-37); (4) Jehovah speaks and Job replies (chaps. 38-42:6); (5) epilogue in prose (chap. 42:7-17).

In the prologue, we are introduced to a man of great wealth and exceptional piety who was "perfect and upright" and who "feared God and turned away from evil." All the blessings of life were his, prosperity and family and friends. Repeated calamities befell this man, following one another with startling rapidity. His flocks are carried off; he is stripped of his possessions and bereaved of his children. After this, Job is smitten with a painful and loathsome disease. Then his friends come to offer their sympathy and aid in reasoning out the cause of his adversities. In the concluding chapter we are given a view of Job restored to prosperity and with another fine family to replace that which he had lost.

The author of this book is interested in some of those great questions which have perplexed humanity throughout the ages: sin, and suffering, and forgiveness; those same questions which must have been in the mind of the writer of Genesis as he wrote the opening chapters of that book; the same ones which caused Gautama, the founder of the Buddhist

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faith, perhaps a hundred years before that period, to bid farewell to his wife and child, to surrender the ease and luxury of his high estate, and to retire apart into a life of asceticism in order that he might become a Buddha, or an enlightened one (Gautama lived 552-472 B.C.).

According to Gordon, "The problem of the poem is to reconcile faith in God with the inequalities of his providence." It gives us some insight into the problems with which men were wrestling and the higher view of God toward which they were reaching. This author depicts in dialogue the rebellion of thinking men against that old belief that God sends suffering as punishment for evil and that sickness and calamity are visitations of divine providence.

Job is represented as probing for truth and sincerely desiring to understand the meaning of life's experiences. His mind is questing, as the minds of truly thoughtful men always have been. He longs for a better understanding of God and to find the real source and reason for these trying experiences of life through which all humanity must pass. He seems to be fighting a mighty battle within himself. His view of Jehovah must become clarified. He must be able to think things through. His idea of God must in some way attain consistency. He has pictured Jehovah as a stern and unyielding dispenser of a brand of justice which almost merges into cruelty; and yet he yearns toward him instinctively for help.

In the dialogue, the three friends, whose faith is

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strong and who adhere rigidly to the old view that all things come from Jehovah, are trying to convince Job that all his troubles, physical and otherwise, are divinely sent and that he but suffers what he deserves. These representatives of orthodox thinking were real friends of Job who had travelled long distances to give him help and comfort. They were serious and thoughtful exponents of the doctrine that suffering is divine penalty inflicted upon the wicked. As it was stated in the days of Jesus (John 9:2), one must even suffer for the sins of his parents.

Job fails to understand how a just God who holds the fortunes of men in his hands, can send prosperity to the wicked while the righteous suffer; or even why the righteous must suffer equally with the unrighteous. He knows his own rectitude of intention and fights against the horrible thought that God does not govern his world in justice and reward righteousness with material blessings. He longs to see his Maker face to face with the conviction that, could he but penetrate the mystery which surrounds Jehovah, all would be made plain. It is not so much to be wondered at that Job could not settle these disturbing questions when we consider that the thinking world still is far from united in its conclusions concerning God and his relations to men, both righteous and unrighteous.

In section number four (chaps. 38-42:6), Jehovah himself intervenes and answers Job out of the

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whirlwind. Job is reminded of his ignorance of the earth's creation and the manner in which all things are ordered. Most pertinent questions are addressed to him with the design of bringing him to a sense of his own impotence and lack of wisdom. What does he know about birds and beasts and sea monsters; and is he able to control them? Finally, humbled by the divine arguments, Job confesses (40:4) his inability to argue the matter further. It is worthy of note that Job never really renounced God. He was earnestly seeking to understand God and to re-establish his one-time companionable relationship with him.

If the dialogue of this book is a dramatic presentation of some questions which troubled the thinkers of that day, then it has a right to its place among the literary productions of all time. The writer of this book causes his chief character to assume a mental attitude never before achieved by any actor on the stage of Hebrew history. We shall be right in regarding it as a distinct advance in the search for a truer understanding of God in his relationship to his world. It may well be called "the struggle of an heroic soul toward light and peace."

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The book of Psalms is unique as a portion of the Old Testament Scriptures. It was not, like most of the prophetic books, the production of one particular period of history; but the growth of centuries.

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Jewish tradition has linked the Psalms with the name of David. He was known as the great singer of Israel and it was just as natural to attribute psalms of praise or other poetic effusions to him as it was to ascribe proverbs and other wise sayings to Solomon. In spite of this, the internal evidence to be found in the great majority of the Psalms, revealed by careful study, is such as to preclude the idea of Davidic authorship.

The fact that David's name appears in the title of a psalm is not to be construed as evidence that he wrote it or that the compiler believed that he wrote it. The name used in the title of a psalm may refer to its writer or it may mean merely a dedication. There are one hundred psalms which bear some person's name in the title; sixteen have headings without titles; and thirty-four have no heading whatever. The persons named in the titles are Moses, "the man of God"; David; Solomon; Asaph; Heman the Ezrahite; Ethan the Ezrahite; the Sons of Korah.

A common designation of the Psalms is "The Psalms of David" but it would scarcely be reasonable to believe that David was the author of a psalm which bears within itself the evidence of coming into existence from five hundred to seven hundred years after his death. A careful study and analysis of the Psalms themselves convinces most Bible scholars that the great majority of them must date after the close of the Captivity. This would not of necessity apply to their original composition, but to their

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compilation and their appearance in their present form. Many had been handed down orally, or otherwise, from an early date and doubtless had been long current in a narrow circle. Roughly speaking, the date of the final compilation may be placed at about 300 B.C.

The Psalms, one hundred and fifty in number, have five natural divisions: 1 to 41, 42 to 72, 73 to 89, 90 to 106, 107 to 150. The first four of the books end with doxologies while the complete collection closes with an outburst of praise in Psalm 150. These division points are marked in the revised version and have been recognized by the Jews from at least the second century of our era. Each division contains within itself certain evidences that it has come down as a group from a distinct source. In the first group, 1 to 41, the word Jehovah occurs 272 times and Elohim only 15 times; while in the second group Jehovah occurs only 30 times and Elohim 164. This would seem to speak quite impressively of the source from which each group was derived. In this connection, we are thinking of the sources "J" and "E" and "JE" and "P" which are briefly described in chapter five.

The first group, 1 to 41, with the exception of psalms one and two, are called the "Davidic Psalms." These are dedicated to David in their titles. According to the titles, one psalm refers to Moses; seventy-three to David; two to Solomon; twelve to Asaph; eleven to the sons of Korah; one

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to Heman; and one to Ethan. Asaph, Heman, and Ethan are the names of chief singers and refer to three Levitical families.

Of the seventy-three psalms ascribed to David, the majority at least cannot be his. It cannot be proved with certainty that David wrote any psalms whatever; but the probability is that he did for there has come down through the ages a deep-seated conviction that he was a sweet singer. There seems to exist a conservative estimate that David composed from ten to twenty psalms, including psalms 3, 4, 7, 15, 18, 23, 24, 82, and possibly 101 and 111.

In addition to the titles, many psalms are inscribed "For the chief musician" which would indicate that they were composed for use in the Temple worship. One very interesting group called "The Songs of Ascents" (120 to 134) were evidently intended to be sung or chanted as the worshipers were on their way to the sanctuary.

Among the arguments for a late date for the composition of the Psalms is the fact that they apparently were written for a community which had absorbed the high teachings of the pre-Exilic and the Exilic prophets and which was now engaged in the exercises of worship in the renewed Temple. The word "selah" which divides the stanzas of many psalms denotes some form of an interlude. It is purely a musical notation.

The center of the psalmist's universe is God. Only the fool said, "there is no God," while the wise man

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was sure of him. The psalmists knew him by innumerable facts of personal experience. Originally, in the old folk-poetry, the home of Jehovah, Israel's God, was the sacred Mount Sinai from which he was summoned amid thunder and storm to aid his people; but in the most of the Psalms he is near at hand and does not need to be summoned.

There is a decided understanding that Jehovah is a God who does things. He not only "sits upon his throne," seeing and hearing all things, but he enters into their life experiences. He judges, comforts, guides, and loves. He rains fire and brimstone on the wicked (11:6) and girds his anointed with strength for the battle (18:39). In his contempt for the plots of the wicked, he laughs aloud (2:4; 37:13). These are anthropomorphic ideas of course, but all ancient religions were full of such ideas. The emphasis of our interpretation should be, rather, upon the fact of God's nearness and accessibility.

The finest gems of Hebrew poetry are to be found among the Psalms. They contain elements which have touched and held the hearts of men in all ages, while many of our best hymns have caught a glow from their altar. Written of local events; sometimes in joy, sometimes in entreaty, sometimes with appreciation and thanksgiving, or yet again in sadness with lamentation; they represent the heart cry of men of faith whose confidence in God finds expression in praise or supplication. The most of them express that deepened feeling of reverence for

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God which grew among the Hebrews after the return from the Captivity.

Harold B. Hunting writes, "These great poems have been on the lips of more men and women throughout the centuries than any other words ever written, except the sayings of Jesus. 'They have furnished the bridal hymns, the battle songs, the pilgrim marches, the penitential prayers, and the public praises of every nation in Christendom since Christendom was born.' The book of Psalms has been called 'the mirror of the soul' because there is no noble emotion, no depth of longing, which does not find expression in it. Hence it is that, as St. Augustine said, 'The Psalms are read in all the world, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.' "

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

In the book of Proverbs we find a combination of the "Wisdom" and the "Poetic" elements which sets the book apart in a class by itself. It has been called a part of the wisdom literature and yet it would classify equally well as poetry according to all the rules which apply to Hebrew poetic art, the parallelism of statements being carefully observed.

A proverb has been defined as "an old and common saying; a sentence of practical wisdom; a paradoxical assertion; a maxim; a saw; an adage." This varied definition, or variety of definitions, would incline us to accept the statement that "From the time

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of Aristotle downwards, all attempts to define a proverb have been unsuccessful." The proverb seems to be a colloquial coin for general use. People half unconsciously make use of wise or pithy sayings, adapting them as a part of their own vocabulary. We speak of "gift horses, half-loaves, a bird in the hand, and sauce for the goose," without realizing that we are speaking proverbially.

The Hebrew proverbs bear a close resemblance to the wisdom literature of other nations. As proverbs pass from one community to another, so they pass from one nation to another. It is stated that the saying, "One swallow does not make a summer," is found in some sixty or seventy versions and has been current for more than two thousand years. The great majority of proverbs are of Eastern birth and the devil is said to figure prominently in those which originate in Europe. While the number of proverbs in any nation would be large, the collection of such sayings among the Spaniards is said to be the greatest, one manuscript in the Heber library containing more than twenty-five thousand proverbs.

The collection of proverbs found in the Old Testament have been regarded as those of Solomon and the title which appears at the opening, "The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, the king of Israel," was supposed to designate him as the author of the entire collection. Solomon is regarded as the father of Hebrew wisdom, and tradition credits him with five thousand proverbs. According to I Kings

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4:32, Solomon "spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs were 1,005," which would make him an author of much more extensive productivity than we have seen evidence of even if he had been the author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs as was formerly supposed.

Solomon acquired a reputation for great wisdom, his fame going out into the countries round about. The visit of the queen of Sheba to his court because she had heard of his wisdom, is told in very interesting fashion in the tenth chapter of I Kings. The growth of legend about Solomon transformed him from a very worldly figure to the type of wisdom and piety which he appears to have been in the judgment of post-Exilic writers. It is not the truly historic Solomon, but the idealized, unhistorical king of Israel who is regarded as the man of wisdom and letters.

The Proverbs must fairly be regarded as the assembled wisdom of different men who wrote and spoke at different periods of national development. Solomon undoubtedly performed his share of the creative work involved else he would not have acquired the reputation which won him designation as the author of all. While many very early writings are included in the collection, we may safely assign the greater part of them to the fourth century before Christ; the entire group probably not being completed before the middle of the third century. We shall not be far wrong if we assign 250 B.C. as

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the probable approximate date for the final compilation.

There is a real value in the Proverbs outside of their literary worth. They serve as a compendium of Jewish wisdom at its purest and best. We must not expect to find any consistent philosophy of life in such a collection of writings. That would be entirely outside their purpose. In some portions a certain degree of unity is apparent as, for example, in the wisdom group; but in general they must be regarded as a cluster of shining lights without co-ordination or harmony. That is what we would expect to find in any other similar group of wise sayings.

The wise men, like the prophets, were regarded as moral guides and teachers. They seem to have been found in public places. Perhaps, like those of other days, they took delight in being heard. Taking their places on busy streets, or in public squares, or by the gates where people were wont to pass, they appealed to the simple to embrace wisdom and to fools to turn from their folly and live (1:20f.).

The book of Proverbs consists of eight distinct parts of unequal length, the most of which are marked by separate titles or introductions.

1. Chapters 1-9. This section has in it more of coherence and continuity than other sections and the theme of the major portion is wisdom. The first six verses are an introduction in which Solomon is named as the author. The aim of the writer seems to be to assemble a group of sayings which will pro-

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mote the pursuit of wisdom, speaking as a father and repeatedly saying, "my son," as to an imagined pupil. Chapters seven, eight, and nine rise almost to the dramatic as a really powerful appeal is made. In chapter eight, wisdom is represented as speaking in person; while in chapter nine (vs. 13f.), folly becomes the opposing speaker and the two present rival invitations and allurements to men.

2. Chapters 10-22:16. This bears the title of "The proverbs of Solomon" and consists mainly of unrelated proverbs covering a great diversity of subjects. These are of poetic form.

3. Chapters 22:17-24:22. This is a group of maxims rather than of proverbs, in which several verses apply to the same thought. They are of a practical character and addressed to "my son."

4. Chapter 24:23, 24. These verses are entitled "The sayings of the wise" and may have been intended as an appendix to the preceding group.

5. Chapters 25-29. These are entitled, "Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out." This group consists of proverbs proper, similar to those of the second group though the subject matter is considerably different. One would gather the impression that they came from a different age.

6. Chapter 30. This chapter is different and is entitled, "The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, the oracle." With the first four verses serving as an introduction, the remainder divides naturally into

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ten groups of proverbs each quite distinct from the others. Neither Agur nor Jakeh are named elsewhere.

7. Chapter 31:1-9. "The words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." A series of homely maxims warning against drink and women and advising justice toward the poor and needy.

8. Chapter 31:10-31. This is the description of a virtuous woman with the verses alphabetically arranged.

The wise men were observers of life and the common events which came to their notice provided the texts from which their terse comments were drawn. From the prominent vantage points at which they stationed themselves, they became critical students of humanity and of the conditions which influenced life.

One of these men has observed some citizen who is fond of his own opinion and very ready to give advice to others, but who closes eyes and ears to the advice and experience of those about him. Of him our friend says (26:12):

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?
There is more hope for a fool than for him."

As he compares two classes of people who come before his notice, he is impressed that it is better to be observant and close mouthed than to be ever ready to express oneself on every occasion, therefore he comments (17:28):

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"Even a fool, if he holds his peace, is considered wise,
When he shutteth his lips, he is esteemed as prudent."

Observing both good and evil men and noting the relative effects of the lives of both, he states (10:6):

"Blessings are upon the head of the righteous;
But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked."

When he observes the rejoicing of one who has been gladdened by a message from an absent one, he says (25:25):

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country."

These wise men were like the prophets in feeling that God inspired their words. Probably they should be considered as prophets under a different name and doing their work in a different way.

CHAPTER XIII

The Five Rolls

THE, so-called, "Writings" of the Old Testament consist of the five Megilloth, or rolls, which were designed to be read liturgically at the great annual Hebrew festivals. Viewed in the light of their use, these five rolls, or books, become important and well worthy of careful consideration.

1. The Song of Songs, or "Canticles," was read on the eighth day of the Feast of the Passover, which really would mean the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

2. Ruth was read on the second day of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (fifty days after the Passover), a harvest festival. It closed the New Year holiday season.

3. Lamentations was read on the ninth day of the month "Ab," the traditional date of the destruction of the Temple.

4. Ecclesiastes, or "The Preacher" (Koheleth), was read at the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Ingathering. It marked the completion of the harvest of fruit, oil, and wine, as well as commemorating the wanderings in the wilderness.

5. Esther was read at the Feast of Purim, called in Second Maccabees, "Mordecai's Day." It com-

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memorated the overthrow of Haman and his plots against the Jews.

THE SONG OF SONGS

The Song of Songs, or "Canticles," or the Song of Solomon, as it has been called, has had various interpretations. It was called the Song of Songs because of the conviction that it was the finest song of all; and this high value was attached to it, doubtless in large measure, because of the tradition that Solomon had written it. It dates from somewhere around 300 B.C.

By the orthodox Jews it was not read as a human love song, but was quite generally accepted as an allegory descriptive of Jehovah in his relationship to his people. Solomon was identified with God and the "belovèd" with the Jewish people whom he had chosen for his own. The early Christian Fathers accepted this interpretation and applied it in their turn to Christ and his church. When it was admitted to the Old Testament canon, it evidently was regarded as an allegory of great value. This view, in addition to the belief that it was written by Solomon, doubtless is responsible for its admission.

It would seem a far-fetched interpretation to view this book as typifying the love of Jehovah for Israel or, at a later date, the love of Christ for his church; yet this interpretation was most commonly accepted and, remarkable as it may seem, still has adherents.

In the evolution of interpretation of this book, in

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addition to the allegorical view, some have seen it as an epic poem, others as a pastoral play with a song and chorus; but more have taken it as a drama. The traditional view of the book as a drama sees two main characters: King Solomon, who was regarded as the author and principal actor, and the Shulammite (6:13), the latter a country maiden, wooed by the king in the guise of a shepherd. The adherents of this view popularly supposed the Shulammite to be identical with Abishag, the Shunammite, of whom we read in I Kings 1 and 2. The poem would be supposed to describe the bond of love between the two from the first moment of mutual burning passion to the realization of the desire for love in the marriage relation.

As a drama, it is decidedly elusive and lacking in plot. It requires rather determined effort to imagine any real consistency or coherence in the various parts of which it is composed. It presents various phases of love but no closely knit romance. Budde's statement that it is a repertoire of wedding songs designed for use during the seven days of the marriage week, or "king's week," and having no other connection than their common praise of wedded love, seems to be most reasonable in view of the subject matter itself. On this hypothesis, the names of Solomon and the Shulammite would merely be assumed by the erstwhile "king and queen" of the festal week. Then as now, every bride has the right to be called the fairest of all on her wedding day,

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however much she may be outshone on other days.

This book was not admitted to the canon until a late date. The sensuous character of its imagery quite naturally raised a doubt of its sanctity. It was not until interpreters came to believe that its message was one of divine love, that it was permitted to take its place. If we think of it in the light of its modern interpretation, we see it not as one co-ordinated story, but as a collection of poems whose theme is love, arranged for a specific purpose. As a mere collection of love songs, they never would have been accorded a place among the sacred writings.

The customs of the Holy-land are practically the same today as they were three thousand years ago. It is a country which does not greatly change. At the time of a marriage ceremony, the bride and groom still recite such poems as these, laudatory of the physical charms of one another. The groom sings of the beauty of face and figure of his beloved, while the bride extols the strength and courage of the man of her choice; or, more literally, of her parents' choice, for they still perpetuate over there the unsatisfactory custom of matchmaking without consulting the desires of the most highly interested parties.

In modern Syria, among the peasants, the seven days of the wedding festival are full of joy. There is feasting, and much coarse jesting, and dancing; together with the reciting of poems descriptive of the physical charms of the bride and groom. The sensu-

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ous descriptions of physical proportions and the amatory pictures presented are distasteful to Western readers, but would not be so obnoxious to those of that country because of custom.

The collection opens with a love dance in which the rustic heroine expresses her ardent longing for the favor of her king, coupled with a modest apology for her own dark beauty; for the sun has beamed too warmly on her face while she kept her brothers' vineyard.

If we carefully read the Song of Songs, we shall be able to identify the different poems of which it is made up and to select those which have been composed for use during a wedding festival. Let us picture a scene. The guests are assembled; the strategic period of the week's festivities is at hand; the bride and groom are in the midst; the groom recites (4: 1-5):

"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil.
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That lie along the side of Mount Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,
Which are come up from the washing,
Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely.
Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate
Behind thy veil.
Thy neck is like the tower of David,

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Builted for an armory,
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
All the shields of the mighty men.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns
That are twins of a roe,
Which feed among the lilies."

Then the bride responds, perhaps with this
(2:3-6):

"As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me was love.
Stay ye me with raisins, refresh me with apples;
For I am sick from love.
His left hand is under my head,
And his right hand doth embrace me."

Or she might recite (5:10-16):

"My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold;
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks,
Washed with milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
As banks of sweet herbs:
His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl:
His body is as ivory work overlaid with sapphires.
His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of
fine gold;
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

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His mouth is most sweet ;
Yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem."

Some commentators have expressed themselves as glad to find a group of love songs among the Hebrew writings. It might seem strange if there were not, coming as these writings do, from a semi-oriental land where love runs warm and deep. While full of human interest, these songs express no spiritual ideas and are not of religious value.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The story of Ruth is one of human interest which properly would classify with love stories, and portions of which are highly dramatic. It is based upon an historic fragment, dating perhaps one hundred years before the time of David. There has been great diversity of views concerning the time in which it was written, and there is little upon which to base an hypothesis. Most modern writers regard it as Exilic or post-Exilic, possibly from four hundred to five hundred years before Christ; one of the arguments for a late date being the fact that some formerly commonly known customs were then obsolete (4:7).

In the days of the Judges, there lived in Bethlehem in Judah a man by the name of Elimelech, with his wife Naomi. Because of a famine in Judea, this couple migrated to the land of Moab, lying to the

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eastward of the Dead Sea, together with their sons, Mahlon and Chilion. There the two sons married young Moabitish women, named Orpah and Ruth. Then later fresh trouble came upon them for Elim-elech died and his sons also.

The three women lived together for a time in their common sorrow but, the famine in Judea having ended, for it is now some ten years since their migration, Naomi decides to return to her own country where she owns a little property. The three women set out together on their long walk around the Dead Sea, but had not gone far until Naomi suggested to the younger women that it would be better for them to return to their own people; as an argument, advancing the thought that it would be easier for them to find husbands in their own land. Orpah acted upon the suggestion and returned to her people, but Ruth refused to leave her mother-in-law in that much-quoted declaration (1:16, 17), "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

In Judea, without the means of livelihood, Ruth went to glean in the harvest fields as was the custom. It chanced (possibly by collusion with Naomi) that she entered the field of Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of

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Elimelech. He took notice of her, asked who she was, and directed that she be kindly treated. There grew to be mutual attraction between the two and in process of time she became the wife of Boaz. This denouement was aided by the fact that the Hebrew custom decreed that a childless widow should be married by the next of kin on the husband's side. The nearest kinsman being unable to assume the obligation because of business reasons (4:6), the way was clear for Boaz. As a result of this union, Ruth became the mother of a son named Obed, who was the grandfather of King David.

Probably a place in the canon was given this book, first, because its opening verse links it with the book of Judges, of which it was long regarded as an appendix; and second, because Ruth, by virtue of her marriage with Boaz, was of the lineage of David and an ancestress of Christ. The subject matter contains nothing which should give it importance from the religious viewpoint.

THE LAMENTATIONS

This book, which is called the "Lamentations of Jeremiah," is a collection of five separate poems, or elegies, very similar in style and all dealing with the desolation of Jerusalem and the suffering of the Jews after the overthrow of their city by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. This disaster is presented in the poems from its different aspects.

These elegies have been artistically, or possibly

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some would prefer to say mechanically, constructed. Each of the chapters except the third consists of twenty-two verses, which corresponds to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The third chapter has three times twenty-two, or sixty-six verses. In the Hebrew language, the verses are begun with the successive letters of the alphabet, one verse being given to each letter in chapters one, two, and four; and three successive verses to one letter in chapter three. Chapter five, though not alphabetical, is made to consist of twenty-two verses.

In some Bibles, these have been appended to the book of Jeremiah and described as the Lamentations of Jeremiah. In the Septuagint, or the "LXX Version," the following statement is prefixed to Lamentations: "And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity and Jerusalem laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said. . . ." However, the fact that the work of the LXX translators was not performed until three centuries after the days of Jeremiah would rob this statement of much of its significance. Nevertheless, it probably does explain why Jeremiah has been called the "weeping prophet." In the Hebrew Bible, the elegies have no connection with Jeremiah.

The language of Lamentations is carefully studied and artistically arranged. The author meditates on the woes of Jerusalem and seeks to comprehend God's purposes. He finds it difficult to understand

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how Jehovah could have abandoned his people to their foes. The unity of the book is considered doubtful. The probable date, or dates, would be about 570 B.C. for the earlier portion and from 550 to 530 B.C. for the later portion.

ECCLESIASTES

At the time of the compilation of the book of Ecclesiastes, there evidently existed in the minds of the compilers no doubt that Solomon was its original author (1:1, 2, 12; 7:27; 12:8, 9, 10). This conclusion was based on the translation of the word "Koheleth," the preacher, which was applied to Solomon as the typical representative of human wisdom, and therefore best fitted to originate such wise sayings. Koheleth really means a "collector of sayings and opinions."

While the writer speaks in the name of Solomon, the garb of royalty appears to be lightly worn. His literary impersonation soon wears away and the internal evidence of the book indicates that the writer is no king, but a more or less embittered subject. Instead of a king speaking from a throne, it is a voice from the ranks bringing its message in an age quite different from that of Solomon.

As evidence that Solomon could not have been the author, it is pointed out that he scarcely would have said, "I was king," as though he had ceased to be so, for he reigned until his death. Neither would Solomon have spoken of "all that were before me in

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Jerusalem" (1:16, 2:7), as it was his father, David, who had established his capital at Jerusalem. In its present form, the book is the result of changes by the compilers which have quite radically altered its original form and teaching. If Solomon were to be regarded as the author, then the book must be made worthy of the idealized king.

The Solomon who speaks here is a different character from the Solomon of history. He speaks neither as a Temple builder nor as a righteous judge. The Solomon of history would scarcely have penned such a satire upon his own administration. Solomon would not have tolerated such abuses if he had felt them. The writer evinces no kingly feeling, but merely adopts a kingly disguise, putting his meditations into the mouth of that king whose reputation had been that of a great sage and philosopher.

It is believed that the earliest possible date for this book would be later than 350 B.C., but internal evidence would place it much later than that. Also, references found in other writings would indicate that it probably was produced during the Greek period in approximately 200 B.C.

Ecclesiastes is an unorthodox production. Its teachings were not in accord with the accepted beliefs of its day. Possibly this may be one of the reasons for its being changed by the redactors; the changes being thought necessary to make it worthy of a place among the sacred writings. The book pre-

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sents a certain philosophy of life, but without consistency.

There is no real progress in the world, but merely repetition. There is change but no advancement. No goal is discovered in nature: rivers run to the sea, but the sea is never full. He believes the same to be true of human existence. Men toil and are not satisfied. The world is no better than in the past and life continues to be a struggle. We see the same evils as of yore. Then life must be a shadow without the substance.

The great burden of his lament is that "all is vanity." He has seen all things under the sun and they are vanity. He has sought to know wisdom and found it but a "striving after wind." His pursuit of mirth and pleasure have proven vain. He planted vineyards, and built houses, and purchased servants, and accumulated treasure; so that he became greater than all before him, yet found it vanity and a "striving after wind." He concluded that the wise man is no better than the fool, though the one can see while the other walks in darkness, for the end of both is the same.

The writer's style is ponderous though at no time profound. He believes that wisdom would be man's best guide, but he has sought it in vain. Though a pessimist, he is full of good humor. He loves life and holds up the mirror to it while he laughs at those who believe it possible to change human nature. There is a time and a season for everything

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and he places these things in comparison in the third chapter. But at the close of that chapter, he gives it all up in despair, as he sees man no better than the beasts and declares again, "all is vanity."

He is a thorough believer in fore-ordination. The time when a man is to be born is fixed, as is the time of his death. Everything is pre-ordained. This may account for his fatalistic outlook. Though he believes in God, there is not much use in praying; for God will bring things to pass in their appointed season without supplications. In this respect, his outlook was decidedly different from that of the prophets. He was out of step with the current religious thought, but there may have been many others of his day who failed to accept the prophetic view and interpretation of life and religion. He did believe in God in spite of his pessimism, and used the name "Elohim" many times.

He gives much good advice, and utters many terse truisms which are essentially proverbs, (4:6) "Better is a handful with quietness, than two handfuls with labor and striving after wind." (4:13) "Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king. . . ." (7:1) "A good name is better than precious oil; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth." (9:10a) "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (11:1) "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

The greater part of his advice is worthy of being

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heeded even though his theology may not be sound. His doctrine of enjoyment is both simple and sound: do not be a mere spectator, but take your place and play your part in the game of life; be busy today, for the time of possible enjoyment will come to an end. The book is intensely human.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Among the five rolls which were read at Jewish festivals, Esther was regarded as the "Roll par excellence." Concerning it the Jews had a proverb, "The prophets may fail, but not the Roll"; one of their great leaders, Maimonides, declaring that in the days of the Messiah the only Scriptures left would be the Law and the Roll. It was produced in an age which was somewhat out of sympathy with the prophets and when national pride was one of the outstanding characteristics.

Ruth and Esther are two books which are full of human interest and of romance, but which from our modern viewpoint make no real contribution either to secular or religious history. We would miss them if they were deleted from the Old Testament for the events which they narrate serve to embellish the history of a period which was likely to prove drab and dull.

The book of Esther holds a unique place in the Bible as it is the only book in which the name of God is not mentioned. This being the case, one might naturally wonder how it obtained a place in the

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canon. Probably that place is due to two things: (1) As a Jewish book, it is intensely patriotic as it recounts how Esther performed a signal service for her race in saving them from the decree of a Persian monarch. (2) It describes how the Feast of Purim, one of the important feasts of the Jews, came to be observed. This feast commemorates the rejoicing of the Jews in Persia after their slaughter of their enemies in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus. At the time of the celebration of that feast, portions of the book of Esther are read and mourning is forbidden for it is a time of rejoicing.

The story is a stirring drama of love and intrigue at the court of Ahasuerus who has been identified with Xerxes, who succeeded Darius in Persia in 458 B.C. The date of its writing is obscure; some holding it to be historical and written in the fifth century B.C., while others assign it to a later date. It probably belongs to the latest Persian or the earliest Greek period. By the majority of writers, it is assigned to the Greek period which began B.C. 332. We shall not go far wrong if we assign it to about 300 B.C. A fair supposition would be that the story rests upon an historic basis and has been put into its present literary form by some Jew who was living in Persia and familiar with the records and traditions of the reign of Xerxes.

One rather extreme view is that expressed by Hunting in his "The Story of Our Bible." He says, "The germ of this story was probably derived

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originally from the Babylonians, who told it at their New Year celebration. In its Babylonian form, it was a story about the gods Marduk and Ishtar. The Jews, during their exile in Babylonia, adopted the Babylonian New Year's feast, calling it the Feast of Purim. They also continued to tell the old Babylonian story, only changing the god Marduk and the goddess Ishtar into human beings, Mordecai and Esther."

The action of the book is progressive and it portrays a most interesting patriotic romance. Ahasuerus gave a great feast to all the princes of his kingdom at his palace in Shushan in the third year of his reign. After this had continued for one hundred and eighty days, his hospitality was extended for a week to all the people of Shushan. Meanwhile, the beautiful Queen Vashti entertained in the royal house for the women. In his enthusiasm as host and under the influence of liberal potations, the king ordered his eunuchs to bring in Queen Vashti that he might display her beauty before his guests. Vashti refused to come and then the king, urged on by his disappointed princely advisers, put her away by a royal edict and issued instructions that henceforth every man was to be master in his own house.

Then measures were taken to fill Vashti's place. All the most beautiful virgins in Persia were collected at Shushan and, after twelve months of preparation, they were presented before the king that he might make his choice. The choice fell upon Esther as the

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most beautiful and most pleasing to the king, though her nationality had been concealed through the advice of Mordecai.

Esther is a Jewess who has spent her life in captivity in Persia. She is the ward and adopted daughter of her cousin Mordecai, a Benjamite, who had been carried into captivity. Shortly after Vashti had been deposed and Esther chosen queen, Mordecai, through the assistance of Esther, was enabled to save the king's life by revealing a plot which had been made against him. The conspirators were hanged and a record of Mordecai's good deed was inscribed in the royal archives.

Then a certain Haman was promoted by the king to be second in power in the kingdom, and a royal decree directed that all should bow down and do him reverence. Mordecai refused to do so and, in retaliation for this failure of one Jew to do him honor, Haman determined on a plan to exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom on a certain date. Then, in the name of the king, having received the king's sanction, Haman sent a decree through all the provinces, ordering that eleven months hence, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, Adar, all Jews, old and young, both male and female, should be massacred and their goods confiscated.

Mordecai communicated with Esther through a trusted chamberlain and she interceded with the king to have the order reversed, having first secured his promise to grant her request "even to the half

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of his kingdom." She invited the king and Haman to a banquet prepared by her, where the king repeated his promise and asked her to make her petition known. She then invited them to come again tomorrow to another banquet when she would make her request known. In the meantime, Haman had caused a gallows to be erected on which to hang Mordecai.

That night, being sleepless, the king had the records of the kingdom brought and read before him, and thus was reminded that Mordecai never had been rewarded for saving his life. As the king was thinking about this oversight and of an appropriate reward for the Jew for so signal a service, he asked Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Of course Haman supposed that the king was referring to him and he suggested that the man be clad in royal apparel and caused to ride through the streets on the king's horse while proclamation be made of the honor being shown him. Naturally, Haman was greatly crestfallen when he was directed to have this honor shown to Mordecai.

When the time of Esther's banquet arrived, the king again asked to know her petition, repeating his promise to grant it. Then Esther told the story of herself and her people and their danger because of the plot of Haman. Then the king hanged Haman on the gallows which he had made for Mordecai and Mordecai was installed in Haman's position. As a

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Persian law could not be revoked, a counter decree was issued permitting the Jews in every part of the kingdom to arm and defend themselves when the appointed day of slaughter should arrive.

On the designated day and the day following, the Jews inflicted a bloody vengeance upon their enemies; and on the third day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. Thus was instituted the Feast of Purim on the fifteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month. The book of Esther acquired great popularity among the Jews, being regarded as superior to any of the prophetic writings.

CHAPTER XIV

The Book of Daniel

THE book of Daniel must occupy a chapter by itself; not because of its importance but because it stands in a class by itself. It probably has been among the most difficult of the books to interpret, and the interpretations given have been exceedingly varied. It was at one time considered as highly prophetic and was classified with the Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. It is now classified with the Hagiographa, or the stories, anecdotes, and legends of the Jews.

The first six chapters purport to be historic and to give the story of Daniel and his companions at the royal court in Babylon. According to the statement, he was taken there as a youth in the third year of King Jehoiakim (605 B.C.) and remained there at least until the third year of Cyrus (536 B.C.).

The Bible story is full of interest. Daniel, Haniah, Mishael, and Azariah were outstanding youths, ten times wiser than the king's magicians and enchanters. When the king had a dream which impressed him deeply and then could not remember what it was about, he put his wise men to a severe test by demanding that they tell him the dream and its interpretation or their lives would be forfeited.

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Daniel and his friends were to share in the penalty along with the other enchanters, but the secret was revealed to Daniel in a "vision of the night" (see 2:12-19). He told the king his dream and its explanation and their lives were spared.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar worshiped Daniel and paid high tribute to his God who had revealed the dream to him. Daniel was made chief governor over all the wise men and prime minister of Babylon; while his companions, now called by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were made satraps under him. Then follows the well-known testing of the companions in the fiery furnace and Daniel's interpretation of other dreams.

In chapter five comes the famous feast of Belshazzar and the interpretation of the writing on the wall, after which Daniel is made one of three presidents over all the kingdom and its petty rulers. In envy, the princes persuade the king to issue a decree forbidding any person to ask a petition of any one, either god or man, except the king, for thirty days on penalty of being cast into a den of lions. Daniel remained steadfast in his habit of prayer, as they were sure he would, and the king reluctantly had him cast into the den of lions. Next morning he rejoiced to find him uninjured and then issued a decree that all should honor and revere the God of Daniel, now called Belteshazzar, who had saved him from the lions.

The second section (chaps. 7-12) pictures some

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existing conditions quite different from those of the Exile, although Daniel is presented as the speaker. There exists quite a unanimity of opinion that this portion, at least, could not have been produced prior to 300 B.C. Many critical scholars go farther than that and are united in the view that it reflects conditions existing during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 176-164) and that, as a whole, it must be assigned to that date. It seems to many that it was written under the persecution of that Persian king at about 168-167 B.C.

The second section of the book consists of a series of visions in which angels reveal the course of history for the near future. The one recorded in the seventh chapter may be taken as typical. The four beasts represent four great world empires which some have thought to mean the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, and the Greek. The ten horns would represent the successors of Alexander the Great, while the "little horn" would be Antiochus Epiphanes under whose persecutions they were at that time suffering. That was a dark period in Jewish history when such a book as this doubtless was needed to give hope of better things to come.

There probably is no doubt that this book rests upon an historical, or at least a traditional background. Probably Daniel was a real person around whom these legends were grouped. Those were the days of the "Maccabees," whose uprising took place under Antiochus IV, and Daniel is freely mentioned

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in the non-canonical "books of the Maccabees." The writer casts these traditions into literary form for the encouragement of his people. He may even have had at his disposal some written fragments from Daniel's own time. This manuscript was originally written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic.

The writer was not an historian and shows a lack of familiarity with the actual events of the time in which Daniel is pictured as living. It is full of historical errors. There was no deportation in the third year of King Jehoiakim. There was no King Belshazzar. The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus, or Nabunahid, though he had a son named Belshazzar, or Belsharuzur. There was no "Darius the Mede" who preceded Cyrus as king and conqueror of Babylon. It is evident that the author was not assuming to write history as such, but to construct an edifying religious narrative on an historical foundation.

There are many scholars who, though unable to subscribe to either the authenticity or the historicity of this book, yet believe in its religious value and its worthiness to a place in the canon. If we regard the book of Daniel as a story intended to teach certain definite truths, as we do the books of Job, Jonah, and Hosea: then it has distinct value: then its apparent purpose of presenting God's care over his people and the rewards of confidence in and loyalty toward him, is entirely fulfilled.

Making definite some of its teachings:—(1) The simple fare to which they were accustomed was better

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for them than the wine and meat of their captors (1:8-16). (2) The natural ability of Jews is far superior to that of Babylonians (1:20). (3) Wisdom and might come from God and are given to those who ask (2:17-23). (4) The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall destroy those kingdoms under which they now suffer (2:44-45). (5) When the rulers of earth realize the power of Israel's God, they will do honor to those who follow him (2:46-49), and proclaim their God the greatest of all (3:29). (6) Israel's God has unlimited power, being capable of saving from a fiery furnace (3:19-27), and from the lions (6:16-23). (7) If heathen rulers only knew the power of Jehovah, they would direct that all should worship him (6:25-27). It is noteworthy that the hand which wrote upon the wall the doom of Babylon and her king did so while they were desecrating the golden cups from the sacred Temple. Daniel's wisdom and visions always were divinely given.

CHAPTER XV

Chronicles — Ezra — Nehemiah

WITH these books we are presented with a new set of historical writings, but from quite a different viewpoint from that of the books of Samuel and Kings. All four of these books, I and II Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah, are written in the same peculiar late-Hebrew style and are thoroughly saturated with the ecclesiastical spirit. They come to us quite largely from the Priestly code but quotations are made generously from the earlier historic books.

These four books might easily have been one for they record an almost unbroken line of events. It would almost seem as though this post-Exilic writer sought to present a history of Israel. He begins with Adam and carries his record through to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 432 B.C. The second book of Chronicles ends in the middle of a paragraph which is copied and concluded as the opening paragraph of Ezra. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah may really be regarded as a sequel to Chronicles.

As the author of all these books so evidently is the same, the date of all may be discussed as one. The internal evidence would seem to preclude a date earlier than 333 B.C. and other considerations cause

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many scholars to assign it to some time between 300 and 250 B.C. At one time it was supposed that Ezra was the author, but the fact that he returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in 458 B.C. makes it conclusive that these books were a compilation made long after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, but including memoirs of those great reformers along with other materials.

The evidence seems quite conclusive that the author was a Levite, and probably a musician. He has a great interest in the Temple and all things pertaining to it, especially the part taken in the religious ceremonies by the Levites and singers. Chapter six of I Chronicles is devoted to the Levites and the song leaders for the Temple service (vss. 31-48). In 15:16-24, he designates the singers and other musicians, while in chapter sixteen a song is given.

CHRONICLES

The two books of Chronicles are unmistakably one. The narrative is continuous and the division merely one of convenience, as modern writings sometimes are divided into volumes. The Hebrew name for these books means "events of the days." The author has made his story cover many days for he touches the high spots or, perhaps better, the things which were of special interest to him, from Adam to the restoration under Cyrus, 458 B.C.

Evidently this author has derived the material for

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his books from all the historical books from Genesis to II Kings. The most of the narratives are greatly condensed, while others have been expanded and additions made. He was writing for a purpose, or at least with certain subjects uppermost in his mind. The wars of the kings do not mean so much to him, but he lays special emphasis on the reigns of those kings who had a zeal for religion and reform in worship. The Davidic line is of special interest to him, for in that lay the promise of the future. He deals almost solely with the southern kingdom, Judah, mentioning the northern only when its affairs touch those of Judah.

As to the Chronicler's sources of material, he not only quoted extensively from preceding books, or possibly the same sources as those utilized by preceding writers; but also, like the authors of Samuel and Kings, frequently referred to other and still older authorities which already have been discussed in chapter six of this volume.

Some of the most commonly mentioned of those older sources are "The Histories of Nathan the Prophet; of Samuel the Seer; of Gad the Seer; of Shemaiah the Prophet; and of Jehu the Son of Hanana; The Book of Jashar; The Book of the Wars of Jehovah; The Vision of Isaiah the Prophet; The Book of the Acts of Solomon; The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite; The Commentary of the Prophet Iddo; The Commentary of the Book of Kings; and Jeremiah's Roll." Usually these are

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mentioned as sources from which further information may be derived if the reader cares to search it out. As an example, when King Abijah died, it is recorded in II Chron. 13:21, 22, "But Abijah waxed mighty, and took unto himself fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons and fourteen daughters. And the rest of the acts of Abijah and his ways and sayings, are written in the commentary of the prophet Iddo."

A careful reading of the books readily reveals the author's ecclesiastical objective. The first nine chapters of I Chronicles are genealogies beginning with Adam. In the last twelve verses of the first chapter we find a list of Edomitish kings and chiefs. The writer passes over the period of the Judges for it is the kingdom in which he is interested. In chapter ten he mentions Saul's war with the Philistines, noting Saul's death and seeming to speak of him only sufficiently to introduce David as his successor. Chapters eleven to twenty-nine deal with David and the events of his reign, to the accession of Solomon. In chapters thirteen to fifteen he tells of the bringing of the ark from Kiriath-Jearim first to the house of Obed-edom, and later to Jerusalem, placing it in the tent which David had prepared. Emphasis is placed upon the fact that none but a Levite shall so much as place his hand upon the ark even to keep it from falling. Singers and musicians accompany the ark in its journey, even David himself being among the number.

After David was established in his own house, he

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aspired to build a house for Jehovah (I Chron. 17) but was restrained through the advice of Nathan the prophet. Chapter twenty-two, verse eight explains that it was because he had been a man of war. However, he lays the plans for the building of the Temple and charges Solomon with the responsibility. He not only gives the plans for the Temple itself, but also for its decorations and appurtenances; also describing the duties of the Levites, prescribing the order of the services, and naming the courses of the twenty-four sets of priests who were to minister in turn. The register of the high priests begins with I Chron. 6:4-15 and is completed in the twelfth chapter of Nehemiah.

The narrative of II Chronicles begins with Solomon and the first eight chapters are devoted to the Temple, its building and decoration. Chapter nine recounts the wisdom, fame, riches, and power of Solomon and the celebrated visit of the queen of Sheba. The following chapters must have been taken largely from real historical sources and recorded as such. Still, even here, the writer's abiding interest in things religious is clearly evident. The moral causes of events are emphasized and the advice of the prophets is much in evidence, kings frequently seeking it and acting upon it.

The Chronicler is writing in the spirit of his age and probably reflects that spirit. It was the age in which David was idealized and even his descendants were considered of surpassing power, while all of

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the worth-while institutions had been founded by him. It was an age in which priestly influences prevailed and it was but natural that all past history should be viewed in their light.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

It is both convenient and appropriate that we consider these two books together. Their date and authorship already have been discussed in connection with those of Chronicles as all seem to have originated from a common source.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were in earlier times spoken of collectively as Ezra and they were so included in the Jewish canon. They present similar problems, deal with the same period, and were put into their present form by the same hand. The entire period covered by the books is a little more than a century, from the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, 536 B.C., to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I, 432 B.C., while other evidence makes it seem probable that they must have assumed their present form at a date as late as 300-250 B.C.

Ezra and Nehemiah lack much of forming a complete history of the restoration, following the Captivity. The author pursues the same idea which seemed to actuate him in writing the books of Chronicles. We are given short sketches of a few important events and but little comes directly from either Ezra or Nehemiah. While the book of Ezra is named after that scribe and priest, its chief inter-

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est is not that of his work but of the rebuilding of the Temple.

The first six chapters of Ezra are devoted to the return of the Exiles and the Temple rebuilding, before Ezra is introduced. The first person is used in 7:27-9:15 which would indicate that this portion was taken from the memoirs of Ezra. The first person is used more extensively in Nehemiah, the "I" indicating that the first seven chapters are quotations from him, together with a considerable portion of chapters twelve and thirteen.

The partial record contained in these books must have been full of interest, not only to this writer but to all devoted Jews. It was a great day in Hebrew religious history when, in 536 B.C., King Cyrus of Persia issued an edict granting permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their place of worship, taking with them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had removed to Babylon. A register of those who returned at this time indicates that 42,360 people availed themselves of the privilege, taking with them their servants and beasts. The altar of sacrifice was set up and the Feast of Tabernacles was observed.

In the second month of the second year (534 B.C.), the Temple foundations were laid amid mingled rejoicings and regrets (3:8-13). The permanent residents, Samaritans and others, asked permission to aid in the work of rebuilding. On being refused by Zerubbabel and Joshua (here called

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Jeshua), they proceeded to harass the builders with the result that not much was accomplished until after the death of Cyrus and the accession of Darius to the throne (B.C. 521). In the second year of his reign, under the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the work was resumed and carried forward to its conclusion, the Temple being dedicated in 516 B.C. (6:15, 16).

Chapter four, verses six to twenty-three proves confusing to the reader for it is a fragment which deals with a different matter and comes from the time of Xerxes (Ahasuerus) (486-465 B.C.) and Artaxerxes (465-425 B.C.).

Ezra arrived with his colony in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458 B.C.). Chapter seven records the letter of authority given to him by the king; after which Ezra himself speaks to the end of chapter nine. After the account of his reforms, which could not have taken very long, we hear no more of him until the arrival of Nehemiah thirteen years later.

Nehemiah came in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (445 B.C.), clothed with authority to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The first seven chapters of Nehemiah are written in the first person. Nehemiah reveals that he dwelt in the palace at Shushan and was a trusted servant, holding the responsible position of cup-bearer to the king. Having heard of the ruined condition of the walls at Jerusalem, his heart became heavy to the extent that the

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king noticed his depression and inquired the cause. Then he stated his case and secured the desired permission to return to his own land. On his arrival, he organized his fellow countrymen and the walls and different gates were rebuilt.

In chapters eight to ten, Nehemiah is no longer the speaker; but the narrator tells how Ezra, with the assistance of the Levites, read the law before the people. This is concluded with a recital of ceremonial observances (chap. 10). The remaining chapters are of miscellaneous contents. In the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes (432 B.C.), Nehemiah was recalled to the court. We do not know how long he remained away, but on his return to Jerusalem he found that many abuses had crept in which made necessary the reforms which are recounted in chapter thirteen.

CHAPTER XVI

Unfolding Conclusions

THERE are some theories and conclusions which come to us from our study of the Old Testament which are clearly matters of growth and development. They do not come intuitively, nor do they spring full-fledged from any special age; neither have they been given as matters of revelation. This is true, not only in our own thinking but in that of those who have gone before us. A careful analysis of the beliefs of those who have gone before us in successive ages reveals progression of thought and crystallization of conviction along certain lines, so that we are justified in saying that ideas and conclusions unfold, or evolve. Chief among these unfolding conclusions as found in the Old Testament and its teachings, are "The Idea of God," "The Belief in Angels," and "Demonology."

THE IDEA OF GOD

Really to know God is the highest aspiration of man. Not to yearn toward the impossible and to aspire to see him with the eyes, but more definitely and clearly to think him through. Even in this advanced day, some of the most deeply thinking men and those most sincere in their devotion to high

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ideals are yearning for a better understanding of God. Job, in his great heart cry, "O, that I might know him," has voiced the unuttered cry of millions of hearts. As a rule people do not say much about it, but they would feel a great sense of satisfaction if they could have their faith bolstered by some more tangible manifestation of deity.

This is the idea of the idolator. He cannot feel satisfied with an invisible object of worship. The image which he apparently worships represents deity to him. Back of the idol of wood, or stone, or gold, in the form of man, or calf, or bull, or whatever other form it may assume, is his idea of God. The idol is but the medium for communion with God whom he really worships. Probably the great majority of idolatrous worshipers have not thought the matter through and would be unable to say whether they worship an idol or an unseen god whom the idol represents; but let us be charitable enough to believe that the unseen god is there.

Above everything else, I see the Bible not only as the record of God's progressive revelation of himself to men but, coupled with that, of man's search for the living God. He who reads his Bible diligently and understandingly will be able to discern a progressive and developing idea of God. This, of course, could not be made complete until Christ came to give mankind a visual demonstration of the kind of a man God would be if he were a man. We people of the Christian age could not expect to be

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satisfied with an understanding of God derived solely from the Old Testament.

The possession of a national God to whom the nation owed allegiance, and in whose name kings reigned and judges administered justice, was not a thing peculiar to Israel. Every ancient state had the same. In all essential ways, Jehovah was regarded as a national God and so appealed to. In all national crises he was depended upon to deliver his people, and his failure to do so was worthy of note. In the event of failure, no blame was attributed to him; but it was entirely in order to inquire what the people or the nation had done to provoke his indifference to their need.

The word "God" must have had many meanings in the interpretations of different peoples, but one uniform meaning is the ultimate source of wisdom and help. It is most interesting to trace the evolution of belief in deity. Formerly each section and department of life had its own god. Also, nations had their own gods and some of them had many gods, each ruling in his own department of life. In ancient Greece, Ares was the god of war, Athena was the goddess of wisdom, and Eros the god of love. Later on, with the discovery of the unfailing harmony of all the laws of the universe, the belief in one supreme and all-powerful god became inevitable.

In most ancient religions of which we have knowledge, the thought of life was associated with motion. It was the only force known to man which explained

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motion and therefore all moving things must be alive. An arrow speeding through the air or a rock falling from a cliff, did so because they possessed life. Similarly, the stars and sun were living beings because they moved in the heavens. This, coupled with the doctrine that the soul is inseparably connected with life and motion, led to that most primitive and superstitious type of religious belief, known as "Animism."

The religion of Israel seems to have experienced at least some traces of this animistic trend in its earlier stages of development. We find the Hebrews highly regarding certain trees and hills and stones and springs, which assume a sacred character and are associated with the thought of deity. In this regard, the religion of Israel, at least during the pre-Mosaic period, differed but slightly from that of other ancient peoples with whom history is better acquainted.

In primitive religions, the presence of the divine in nature is conceived in a very literal and naïve way. Deity is localized in a mountain or a tree or in the sun. One must go to the place where deity dwells in order to worship him, and thus shrines and altars were established in places where men had realized the divine presence. In the primitive type of Semitic altar the deity is practically identified with the stone or stones of which it consists. It becomes the dwelling place of that particular god.

Sacred trees have been common in many parts of

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the world. The Arab population of this present day hang bits of clothing or ornaments on them as symbols of their attachment to the gods they shelter. Mounts Sinai, Nebo, Seir, and Zion all represent the dwelling places of deity. They probably were so regarded long before the Hebrews conquered Canaan. They became sacred spots in Hebrew history because the Hebrews fell in with the current religious thought and practices of those before them. The oak, or terebinth, at Mamre, associated with Abraham, is a sacred tree and the dwelling place of a deity.

Palestine was full of sacred stones. Mount Zion became the site of Solomon's Temple because of its sacred rock, which was sacred not alone to the Hebrews but had been so regarded by the Jebusites before them. Solomon located the Temple there because the stone had made it a sacred spot. The stone on which Jacob rested his head at Bethel when he received a vision of Jehovah became to him a sacred object.

For the Canaanites, the old Semitic deities became the protectors of the soil, presiding over vegetation. Their friendship must be won if the fields were to be productive. The Hebrews adopted this idea and made Jehovah the lord of the soil, offering to him the first-fruits of the harvest even as the Canaanites had brought their offerings to Baal. The altars and sanctuaries on the eminences, or "high places," were taken over and dedicated to Jehovah. For a full dis-

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cussion of this subject, I would refer the reader to Jastrow's "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions."

The Old Testament contains abundant evidence of the fact that Jehovah must be placated and his favor gained. When Jacob became afraid of the consequences of his troubles with the Hivites (Gen. 34), he went again to Bethel to dwell and to rebuild the altar there in order to ensure his protection at the hands of Jehovah (Gen. 35:1-15). David purchased a threshing floor and oxen from Araunah the Jebusite, building an altar and offering sacrifices to Jehovah in order to stop the plague with which Jehovah had afflicted Israel (II Sam. 24:18-25). According to Genesis 3:8, primitive man had a consciousness of God's presence when he sinned and was disobedient.

The erection of altars was a comparatively common occurrence. After the landing of the ark, Noah built an altar and offered a burnt offering of every clean beast and fowl (Gen. 8:20). When Abram first visited Canaan, he built an altar to Jehovah at Shechem (Gen. 12:7) and another at Bethel (vs. 8). After his return from Egypt, he again visited Bethel (Gen. 13:4). When Jacob stopped at Luz on his way to Haran and had his dream in which Jehovah spoke to him, he set up a stone and poured oil upon it as in consecration and called the place Bethel (Gen. 28:18, 19), meaning "the house of God." From that time forward, it would be a holy place to him.

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This localized conception of deity led inevitably to anthropomorphisms, or the representation of deity with a human form or with human attributes. There was a time when men thought of God as an individual among individuals, acting upon them from without. Adam and Eve heard the voice of God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8f). When three men appeared before Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, he recognized in them the appearance of Jehovah and addressed them as "my Lord" (Gen. 18:1f). When Jacob wrestled in prayer on the bank of the brook Jabbok, he wrestled with God as with a man (Gen. 32:24ff.). Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai and called, and Moses went up to meet him (Exod. 19:20). In the preparation for the slaying of the first-born of the Egyptians, the Hebrews were instructed, "Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you" (Exod. 12:23). After the angel of Jehovah had appeared to Manoah and his wife, Manoah said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judg. 13:22). The anthropomorphic conceptions in many of the Psalms probably make them more real to the writer as he vests God with human traits of character and makes him approachable.

There is no doubt that the early thinking of the Hebrews along religious lines was influenced to a

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considerable extent by their contact with other peoples, both in Egypt and in Canaan. In fact, a background of idolatry was in the lineage of Abraham, for we are told in Joshua 24:2f. that his fathers served other gods in Haran before Abraham received his call and started on his long journey to Canaan. The more we learn of Babylonian practices, the more striking the similarities become. Both Hebrews and Babylonians sprinkled the blood of sacrifice upon the lintel of the door.

That Abraham's relatives in Haran still continued to worship other gods, is evidenced two generations later when Jacob went back to that country after his trouble with Esau. After Jacob had served Laban, his mother's brother, twenty years for his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and his flocks; he and his family, with all their possessions, departed one night to return to Canaan without waiting to say farewell to Laban who was away from home at the time. As they went, Rachel stole Laban's "teraphim," or household idol, and took it along; presumably that Laban's good fortune might accompany them (Gen. 31:19). Laban came after them and searched for the idol but found it not.

When the time came that Israel emerged into the light of written history, it had broken, at least in principle, from heathenism. In the national memory, this momentous step was connected with Abraham. When he received his call in Haran and started on his long journey into a strange land, it was in re-

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sponse to a commanding voice which the writer of Genesis feels sure was the voice of Jehovah. It is somewhat difficult in this connection to separate the earlier from the later views, because the late date of the patriarchal narratives makes them in a large measure the vehicles of prophetic ideals. Yet all that we know about Abraham gives assurance that he went forth upon his great adventure into a strange land with the strong conviction that Jehovah was leading him.

When Moses came into the picture in leading his people from Egypt, he helped to widen the breach with heathenism. Mosaism sought to protect Israel by prohibiting the worship of any divinity save Jehovah, its God (Exod. 20:3), and by bringing under his ban those immoral acts and practices to which the genius of heathenism was, to say the least, indifferent. However, the followers of Moses were not altogether free from those influences as was shown by their construction of a golden calf (Exod. 32:1-8) under the leadership of Aaron while Moses was on the mountain. This is another evidence that the people felt their need of some visible representation of deity, for it was when Moses delayed in his return from the mountain that they asked Aaron to "make us gods which shall go before us."

During their wanderings in the wilderness, Moses and his followers encountered a plague of serpents by which many were bitten and died (Num. 21:6-9). They recognized the plague as the result of sin and

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begged Moses to intercede with Jehovah to remove the serpents. Moses made an imitation serpent of brass and set it on a pole in the midst of the camp. Those who were bitten were to look upon the serpent of brass and live. This serpent was preserved among the Israelites down to the time of King Hezekiah (725 B.C.). When Hezekiah found the people regarding this relic with superstitious worship, he caused it to be broken in pieces and, in contempt, gave it the name of "Nehushtan," a piece of brass (II Kings 18:4).

Notwithstanding all the traditions which the redactors have associated with Abraham, there is a conviction in the minds of many Bible scholars that it really was Moses who introduced the Hebrews to "Jahweh," or Jehovah. "Jahweh" probably was the spirit dwelling in a certain desert volcano called Sinai or Horeb. From time immemorial he had been worshiped by a tribe called the Kenites. Moses had dwelt among them and married a daughter of their chief priest. When Moses led his band of forlorn followers to the foot of this holy mountain, it was but natural that a covenant should be entered into whereby Jahweh should become their God and they should bind themselves to him in worship. As long as his commandments were observed, the Hebrews could be assured of his divine protection. It also was but a natural consequence that an ark should be built for the roving spirit of Jahweh.

Jahweh wandered with his people from place to

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place (Judg. 5:4, 5). He came originally from Mount Seir in Edom (Deut. 33:2) but established a dwelling place at Sinai. Eventually, his central sanctuary was at Mount Zion. He left his original seat and made his home wherever his people happened to be. In the Baal worship, each center had its local Baal, or lord of a certain locality. Jahweh was not limited to any single locality but was found wherever his people were. This was a distinct step toward the more advanced idea of an omnipresent God.

After the establishment of the Hebrews in Canaan, there followed a revival of interest in heathenism. The inhabitants of Canaan were still living in the midst and their practices, religious and otherwise, were bound to influence the Israelites. The history of the book of Judges moves through a succession of cycles so far as religious practices are concerned. The people forsake the worship of Jehovah and serve the Baalim and the Ashtaroth; Jehovah in anger delivers them into the hands of the spoiler; then he repents of his harshness and raises up judges who save them. After the death of a judge through whom Jehovah has worked, the people once more turn back to deal more corruptly than their fathers (Judg. 2:11-19). This instance is but typical of repeated experiences.

Probably the strongest enticement for the Hebrews lay in the character of the Canaanitish worship which, in the main, "resting on a deification of

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the productive forces of nature, gathered into its religious practice all that is comprehended in laughter and license." It also had its other side which revealed its divinity as cruel and lusting for blood, but that element also would make its appeal to the Hebrew nature. The divine remedy for backsliding was war, and Jehovah repeatedly would raise them up a leader under whom they could march to victory.

The Baal Worship

Of the various religious cults which exerted their influence upon the people of Israel, that of the Baal worship probably was the most persistent.

The word "Baal" means owner, or lord, and is applied both to men and gods. When used of men it implies possession. When applied to gods it also means owner, the possessor of the land. The Baalim were regarded as producers of fertility; and to them was ascribed the bestowal of the corn and wine and oil. We think of the sun and rain as givers of fertility, but the worshipers of Baal gave thanks to him as to the owner of the soil.

Originally, there was no supreme deity called Baal. The Baalim were local deities of particular places, distinct from each other. The local Baals fertilized each his own district by his streams or springs, and hence they were regarded as the owners of those naturally fertile spots. Tribute was due to them for the crops grown or for water used in making the ground fertile by irrigation. Thus as the

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gods were givers of fertility, animal fruitfulness also was attributed to them and, in many places, their worship was debased by repulsive immorality.

When Israel entered Canaan the worship of the Baalim was everywhere present. It was especially associated with agriculture which the Israelites learned from the Canaanites; hence there was grave danger lest they should take over the religious festivals connected with the various agricultural seasons and succumb to the fascination of their sensual nature worship. In numerous recorded cases, this actually occurred.

One notable case was that in which King Ahab established the Baal worship of his wife Jezebel in Israel, building Baal a house and an altar (I Kings 16:32). This is an instance of a local Baal worshipped in a foreign land. The Baalim were chiefly worshiped at the high places, but also on house-tops. There was a prevalent idea that the gods were on high; so their sacred places were on hills or mountains, or in sacred trees or pillars. Obelisks stood beside their altars, and sometimes an Asherah, or sacred pole. Sometimes the children of the devotees of Baal were sacrificed as burnt offerings to their god (Jer. 19:5). The Baal gods had not only priests but prophets. These were numbered at four hundred and fifty in the time of Ahab. A graphic picture of their frenzied prayers and their cutting of themselves to gain the attention of their god is given in I Kings 18:28.

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The Asherah

Asherah (plural, Asherim) was a Phœnician and Canaanitish goddess which may possibly have been confused with Ashtoreth, whose identity is well established. The actual existence of Asherah as a separate divinity is a disputed point. The compilers of the historical books may have misunderstood the term and given it an identity of its own, when it should have been copied as Ashtoreth.

Its meaning is a sacred tree or pole. The ordinary furniture of a Canaanitish high place or shrine consisted of an altar near to which stood a stone pillar or a sacred tree, or Asherah. It was a tree or the stump of a tree, planted in the earth. It could be artificially made (I Kings 16:33) though always of wood. It might receive an image-like form (I Kings 15:13). It could be cut down (Exod. 34:13), plucked up (Mic. 5:14), burned (Deut. 12:3), or broken in pieces (II Chron. 34:4). It may have been a survival of tree worship. The high places which are mentioned in this connection refer to the worshiping places.

The Asherim, like the Baalim, had prophets as well as priests. Four hundred of these prophets were supported by Ahab (I Kings 18:19).

Before ever the Israelites entered Canaan, Moses warned them against the Asherim and said that they must cut them down (Exod. 34:13); but this worship seems to have persisted, sometimes in greater measure and sometimes in less, during all their his-

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tory. The worship of Baal and Asherah seems to have been closely associated. Kings Manasseh and Ahab both reared altars to Baal and made an Asherah (II Kings 21:3). In Judges 3:7 we are told that Israel served the Baalim and the Asheroth.

Ashtoreth

Ashtoreth, of which Ashtaroth is the plural, was the principal goddess of the Sidonians and was also prominent among the Phœnicians. This goddess figured prominently in the religious lapses of the people of Israel during the periods both of the judges and the kingdom (Judg. 2:13, 10:6; I Sam. 7:3, 4; 12:10). In her honor Solomon built a high place on the hills opposite the Temple (II Kings 23:13), and there was a temple to her at Ashkelon where the Philistines deposited the armor of Saul (I Sam. 31:10).

If, as it is supposed, Ashtoreth is to be identified with the goddess Ashtart, we shall have a clearer idea of her attributes for Ashtart was pre-eminently the goddess of sexual passions. As a consequence, the rites connected with her worship were of an unchaste character.

Although Ashtart was distinctively a Phœnician goddess, Phœnicia was not her original home. There seems to have been a close relationship between her and "Ishtar," the Babylonian goddess who brought vegetation upon the earth. Ishtar is very prominently featured in the ancient Assyrian traditions,

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holding a position there second only to that of the great Asshur himself. S. R. Driver tells us that she was (1) the lady, or mistress, of the locality in which she was worshiped; (2) queen of the gods and princess of heaven and earth; (3) a warrior goddess; (4) the goddess of generation and productivity; (5) she was identified with the planet Venus.

Other strange gods which sometimes were worshiped by the Hebrews were Chemosh, Milcom, Molech, Dagon, and the Teraphim. These, together with Ashtoreth and the Asherim, were destroyed by King Josiah in his reformation, 639 B.C., and onward.

From the earliest period in which God is mentioned, he is regarded as a person. The word Jehovah is a personal name. "He hath triumphed gloriously" (Exod. 15:21); He is one whom men may love (Judg. 5:31); He loves and hates and seems subject to human moods. Yet these are not necessarily to be regarded as anthropomorphic allusions. When "he makes bare his holy arm" (Isa. 52:10); or "lifts his hand as a signal to the nations" (Isa. 49:22); or "musters his hosts for battle" (Isa. 13:4); this writer of Exilic days is but speaking in the terms of personality even as we in this modern day.

But there are other evidently earlier references which seem to localize Jehovah. He is said to have walked in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen.

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3:8), and to have come down to see the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:5). When Moses went up into Mount Sinai, Jehovah came down to the mountain; "Jehovah descended in fire" (Exod. 19:18-20). Wherever men realized the presence of God, there they would establish an altar and on subsequent occasions go back to worship him. We have already noted this in the experiences of Abraham and Jacob. Many altars thus established became permanent.

The ark of the covenant was considered to be in a special sense the dwelling place of Jehovah. Being personally present (Num. 10:35, 36), he guided his people on their march. The ark, borne by the priests, shows the way while the people follow at a distance (Josh. 3:3, 4). The priests were always the bearers of the ark. When a house was built in which Jehovah could have a permanent dwelling place, the ark lost its significance and disappeared.

The religious development of Israel is virtually a development of the idea of God. As God was the only known force in the world, particularly in human history, some conception of him must be able to explain all things. Very naturally, this conception was not always clear. In Israel there was more or less of conflict in religious progress, but even this had its advantages. If a conflict implies lower elements and conceptions, it also implies a higher element striving to transform the lower. This higher element is to be identified with the moral influences in the conception of Jehovah.

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From the Exodus onward, Jehovah was the God of Israel, primarily a national God. If at times portions of the people declined to the service of the local gods, a conscience within the people always recalled them to the service of their own God.

Jehovah was a God of unlimited power; he commanded nature, sending a great flood, opening the windows of heaven, and breaking up the fountains of the great deep (Gen. 7). Before Joshua, he made the sun and moon to stand still in the sky (Josh. 10:12). All earthly and heavenly forces obeyed him. He caused an east wind to blow and roll back the sea (Exod. 14:21). He brought locusts upon Egypt (Exod. 10:13), and turned the rivers into blood (7:19). In the days of Ahab he scourged the land with drought for three years and a half (I Kings 17:1, 18:1). The entire government of the people is in his hands. When a crisis arises, he raises up a judge to save the people. Human leaders are the form in which he clothes his own efficiency. All things come from him, both good and evil.

With the coming of the prophetic age and the Exile, their vision of Jehovah seems to clarify to some extent. The almost simultaneous rise of four such men as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah must exert its influence on all their contemporaries. Then followed those post-Exilic years when writers were many and prolific and their views were becoming more consistently clear. It has been said that some

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of the loftiest views of God to be found in the Old Testament come from Job and the third Isaiah.

This discussion cannot fairly close without at least a word on the modern understanding of the divine personality. Concerning that conception, we must recognize that the Christian world still is far from being a unit. Modernists and Fundamentalists have differing explanations of how God brings things to pass though both agree that he is the Creator and the one true God.

It is not so much that the age has changed as that men's thought has changed. Age learns from age and thinking should clear even as institutions grow. In this day we are thinking of God not as being outside the world, but within it; a vital force and mind, controlling, directing, animating; the Creator and Director; filling his universe and accessible to all.

That old idea of God which could understand him as being angry with David and deliberately sending a pestilence which destroyed seventy thousand innocent persons (II Sam. 24:15) arouses in the modern mind no feelings of respect or love. It does not represent the modern and Christian conception. The idea of God as expressed in some of the Imprecatory psalms is crude and repellant. It pictures a God who hates and curses and delights in punishing offenders; who sends not only good but evil into the world; and sometimes uses the enemies of his people as the instruments in his hands to punish them for their offenses. We might well imagine such a tribal deity

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as the ancient Hebrews worshiped as being capable of forsaking his people in the hour of their need; but not the kind of a God whom Christ revealed.

We find God today not on some holy hill, or in a sacred tree, or in the lintel of a door, or at an altar built of stones, or in a tower of Babel, or a temple at Jerusalem; but in the dark, wherever we are, as we go about the humble tasks of earth and our hearts reach out to him. God does not reside in some far-off exalted heaven, as the old priest thought who dwelt in a tree that he might be nearer him, but here in his universe, very close to the lives of men, where he can comfort and help.

God never forsakes his people and never sends evil or suffering or sorrow or death. These things come into human experience through the inevitable operation of natural laws which make no discrimination. Very literally, "the rain falls alike on the just and the unjust." When our loved ones die we need not question, "Why did he take my dear one?" or "What have I done that God should punish me?" Or when sickness comes, we need not inquire, "Who did sin, this man or his parents?" These experiences are not sent as enactments of divine providence. They come to us as a part of human experience and are governed entirely by natural laws which make no personal discriminations. None of us, no matter how righteous, have any right to expect exemption from the operation of such laws.

Jehovah is a God of justice and mercy and love

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who does not need to be conciliated by offerings; neither does he hold himself aloof. Like the father in the parable of the "Prodigal Son," his love never fails and he stands ready to welcome the prodigal with open arms.

The history of religion is the history of humanity's quest after God. Men groped in comparative darkness until Christ came and threw the clear light of his God-illuminated life not alone upon life's problems, but upon the character of God. He answered the little boy's question of "what does God do all day" by giving to the world an animated life picture of God moving in the midst of his people. In his own living, he gave a demonstration of the kind of a man God would be if God were a man. Using the definition of William Newton Clarke, through Christ we have come to know God as "a personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates, sustains, and orders all."

THE BELIEF IN ANGELS

On the basis of Old Testament references, we are justified in stating that a belief in angels seems to have been quite firmly fixed from the beginning. Angelic manifestations have been variously described but have been recognized since the beginning of Hebrew history. The really simple and comprehensive definition of angels is "messengers." If we go beyond that and investigate the various passages of Scripture which record their appearances, we shall find that they were regarded as agents or mes-

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sengers of God. They are bringers of tidings or of wisdom.

In the New Testament, angels usually are called spirits. But in Old Testament days the term "spirit" had not yet come into use in that connection. In those days it was even not applied to God. So in this consideration of Old Testament teachings we shall not use the term "spirit," but "angel."

As visitants or representatives from another world, they were not thought of as having been created but as having existed through all time. They were considered as immaterial beings whom God used as his servants to fulfill the purposes of his providence. They were regarded as a part of God's care over his people. Men, conscious of being under a multitude of external forces, peopled the world with spirits, or angels. The greater part of these would be designated as heavenly visitants, but others were thought to have their abiding places in stones or trees or fountains.

In the earlier Old Testament writings there were, of necessity because of their interpretations, angels of good and angels of evil. The belief at that time was that all things, both good and evil, came from God. At that time the belief in a personal devil had not yet arisen, and therefore the evil could not be attributed to him. It must come from God as the punishment for disobedience or other forms of wrong-doing.

Angels were sometimes promised to those who

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needed their direction. Moses was promised, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" (Exod. 23:20, 32:34). The children of Israel had an attendant angel in their flight from Egypt (Exod. 14:19). Sometimes the angel is directly identified with God and claims to exercise all the prerogatives of God (Exod. 3:4, Gen. 16:10). Manoah feared that he would die because he had seen God (Judg. 13:21, 22).

When Joshua and the people of Israel were before Jericho, the angel of God stood before him with drawn sword and Joshua fell on his face and worshiped him. He had come to lead them to victory (Josh. 5:13-15). The angel of God may appear in human form (Gen. 18:1ff.); or in a flaming bush (Exod. 3:2); or he may speak out of heaven in a dream (Gen. 31:11ff.). They speak and walk and touch men, telling them to rise and eat (I Kings 19:5); take them by the hand (Gen. 19:16); and eat with them (Gen. 18:8).

When they appear, it is in human form; they are called men (Gen. 18:2). The angel of the Lord told Manoah's wife that Samson would be born; there was much conversation at that time (Judg. 13). The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and argued with him to convince him that he should be a judge in Israel and go forth to deliver his people (Judg. 6:11-24).

Taken as a whole, it seems that we may be en-

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tirely safe in saying that angels are messengers of God, usually in human form. They constitute another group of those who are willing to speak God's message or do his will. Similarly, red cross nurses have been called the "angels of the trenches" or some fine, consecrated woman has earned the title of "the angel of the slum."

DEMONOLOGY

The doctrine of demonology is one which peoples those mysterious realms where evil spirits are supposed to dwell with powerful representatives of unfriendly or angry gods. Primitive man, finding himself confronted and threatened by forces which he was unable to control, sought to appease them. Hurricane, lightning, sunstroke, plague, flood, and earthquake were ascribed to wrathful personal agencies. They were demonstrations of the unseen and potent forces which were exerting a baleful influence upon life.

The earlier conception, which, indeed, endured until the time of the prophets and later, was merely that of a more or less powerful and intermediate agent between the gods and men who acted as the minister of divine displeasure. That early view looked upon all such representatives as angels; some of them good and some bad. The belief in a personal devil as the chief of demons did not arise until the time of the Captivity and later. Even in the story of the Fall in the mythical garden of Eden, the devil

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does not appear as such. It was a serpent which spoke and tempted Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1, 13).

In the earlier Old Testament views, all things came from God or from the gods. In those days there had not yet arisen the theory of a personal evil spirit whose power must have been nearly if not quite equal to that of Jehovah, for he frequently defeated Jehovah's purposes. The early Hebrew attributed all things to God; wars, and droughts, and pestilence, and other calamities. In our consideration of the days of the Judges and the nature of God, we have briefly considered these things and those considerations will apply equally here.

In the days of the prophets there developed a new conception of Jehovah. In the light of that new conception, it became no longer consistent to attribute all disagreeable and harmful things to his ordering. As a result, there developed a belief in another powerful being who was antagonistic to Jehovah and from whom all evil originated. There is little doubt that these views on demonism came from Babylonian influences, as magic and destructive spirits played prominent parts in the Babylonian religion.

It is from the Apocryphal literature that people have gleaned most of their ideas of demons and fallen angels who assail men's bodies, causing convulsions and other violent types of disease. These ideas grew until, at the beginning of the Christian era, the world was full of demons, causing many

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different diseases and types of physical disability. These ailments were considered as cases of demoniac possession. The demons must be exorcised by spells or incantations before normality could be restored.

Demonism and the exorcism of evil spirits were well established long before the days of Jesus. They continued to play a conspicuous part in the literature and practice of the Christian church throughout the early period and during the Middle Ages. The early Church Fathers had a conviction that a disciple of Jesus should be able to exercise power over demons by speaking his name. This idea persisted with modifications up to the time of the Reformation, and even among the reformers opinion and practice respecting exorcism were divided.

When we come to understand this theory of demonology and to realize how it was introduced among the Hebrews, we must begin to comprehend that this devil is neither so old nor so powerful as many have supposed. The theory might have fitted in satisfactorily with the Babylonian religion which always recognized the existence of rival gods who warred among themselves; but it could have no proper place in monotheistic worship.

It is possible that back there in post-Exilic days a belief in demons, or even possibly in a personal devil, may have been an advance step in the evolution of ideas concerning God and the causation of events. At any rate, it was the result of men's grop-

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ing after truth and trying to solve the problem of evil in the world. But now we should have outgrown such conceptions and have come to see evil and temptations as the natural cravings of human nature and the alluring persuasions of those institutions which men permit to flourish in their midst.

In these days our clarified conception of Jehovah must affect our ideas concerning demons. We have come to believe in a God who is really omnipotent and who is not compelled to divide his power with some other spiritual ruler who works in opposition to him. No great personal destroying spirit can exist in a universe whose God is omnipotent.

CHAPTER XVII

The Apocrypha

THE word Apocrypha means "hidden things" and the term probably was applied at first in quite a literal sense, for these were books which were kept from the public. Two possible reasons were assigned: (1) They had not received the seal of ecclesiastical approval; (2) many considered them too difficult to understand because of the depth of revelation which they contained. Probably the former of these was the chief reason for their concealment.

The authority of these books was not considered to be on an equality with the canonical books and for this reason they were excluded from the canon. Possibly the fact that those of the Old Testament period were written after the supposed extinction of prophecy may have had something to do with their exclusion, but this rule could not be too literally applied on account of the late date at which some of the canonical books were written.

There are two groups of Apocryphal books, one of them preceding the Christian era and dealing with events of the post-Exilic years, while the other group dates concurrently with the New Testament writings.

THE APOCRYPHA

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

This group of manuscripts fill the gap between the Old and the New Testaments. They are found in the Greek version (the old Septuagint) and also in the Latin Vulgate. They have appeared in some of the older Protestant versions, though usually in smaller type or with an indication given in some other way that they are not to be considered as on a par with the approved books of the Bible. They probably came into existence at varying periods during the last three hundred years before the opening of the Christian era, though a few of them bear evidence of being even later than that.

THE BOOKS

- The First Book of Esdras
- The Second Book of Esdras
- The Book of Tobit
- The Book of Judith.
- Additions to the Book of Esther
- The Book of Wisdom, or The Wisdom of Solomon
- Ecclesiasticus, or The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach
- The Book of Baruch.
- The Epistle of Jeremias
- The Additions to the Book of Daniel
- The Prayer of Manasses
- The First Book of Maccabees
- The Second Book of Maccabees
- The Third Book of Maccabees
- The Fourth Book of Maccabees
- The Fifth Book of Maccabees
- The Book of the Secrets of Enoch
- The Sibylline Oracles

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The Apocalypse of Baruch
The Psalms of Solomon
The Assumption of Moses
The Ascension of Isaiah
The Book of Jubilees
The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

This list of Old Testament Apocryphal books may not be arranged in correct chronological order. In fact, it would be presumptuous for anyone to assume the responsibility of deciding upon this point. The order and the dates of the writings probably are not so important. At any rate, it would be impossible to fix them definitely.

FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

This is very closely related to the canonical books, Ezra and Nehemiah. In fact, these were long known as Esdras I and Esdras II while the Apocryphal books were called Esdras III and Esdras IV. This book of Esdras is a repetition of the rebuilding of the Temple and is almost entirely composed of materials which exist in canonical books, only one section (3:1-5:6) being original. It was written in Greek instead of Hebrew and may have been produced to acquaint Greek-speaking Jews with the favor which was shown to their nation by foreign monarchs.

SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS

This also was written in Greek but seems to have been widely circulated in the early Christian church.

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It recounts seven visions or revelations concerning the people of Israel and evidently was written by a Jew. Most modern Bible scholars date it after the opening of the Christian era. Some believe that the two concluding chapters were written as late as 260-268 A.D.

THE BOOK OF TOBIT

There seems to be an open question as to whether this book should be considered as history or romance, and most modern writers incline to the latter view. According to the narrative, Tobit, the hero of the book, is a pious Jew and a member of one of the ten tribes of Israel. It gives a picture of his home life during the Captivity, where he remained loyal to the faith of his fathers. The author evidently was a Jew who wrote at some time during the second century B. C.

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

According to the "LXX," this book is the story of King Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria, his wars and his successes. When he carries his aggressions to the doors of Israel, Judith, a pious and beautiful widow, wins the favor of his military leader and takes his life, thus saving her people. The book features her service and, at its close, records her death. Peace reigned during her life and for a long time afterward. The historical situation here pictured is impossible, though the book is considered a work of literary skill.

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ADDITIONS TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER

As the title indicates, this book deals with Esther and some of the other characters mentioned in that canonical book. The most notable additions, according to their titles, are "The Prayers of Mordecai," "The Prayers of Esther," and "The Dream of Mordecai."

THE BOOK OF WISDOM OR THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

This book was written in Greek at some time after 250 B.C. Its ascription to Solomon is in harmony with the old idea that all wisdom had its origin with that king of honored memory. The author must have been a Greek-speaking Jew who was very loyal to his Jewish faith. He describes the conflict which the divine wisdom must wage with the godless wisdom of the world, and recounts the wonders wrought by wisdom in the history of Israel. The general aim seems to be that of revealing the goal of life as something nobler than mere existence or pleasure of any sort. Jehovah is full of love for all his creatures, and he spares them because he has pleasure in all that lives.

ECCLESIASTICUS OR THE WISDOM OF JESUS, SON OF SIRACH

This is the largest book of the Old Testament Apocrypha and is considered as in some respects the most important. It came into use about the middle

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of the fourth century A.D., though it probably was written before the Christian era. Some have thought the author to have been a priest. He calls himself "Jesus, son of Sirach, of Jerusalem" (50:27). He is essentially a preacher, and represents wisdom as the source of all virtue and blessedness. Much space is devoted to ethical and social teachings. The book was written in Hebrew.

THE BOOK OF BARUCH

The opening verses of this book indicates that it contains the words of Baruch, son of Nerias, but he is spoken of in the third person. The book deals with the time of Jeremiah, and Baruch was his friend and secretary. However, an analysis of the book reveals that it consists of four portions so distinct that they must have come from four different authors. No real contribution to the history of that period is made.

THE EPISTLE OF JEREMIAS

In the Vulgate, this epistle appears as the sixth chapter of Baruch, but in the Septuagint it is treated as a separate book. It probably was written in Greek, and it purports to be a message from Jeremiah to those who were about to be led away into Babylonia as captives. He is seeking to forewarn the Jews of the Dispersion against the danger of falling into idolatry.

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ADDITIONS TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL

These additions to the canonical book are three fragments bearing the titles of "The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children," "The Story of Susanna," and "Bel and the Dragon." While mentioning Daniel, they make no contribution to the history of that Hebrew character.

THE PRAYER OF MANASSES

This is a short, finely constructed prayer which was translated from the Greek. It is a fine penitential prayer which is regarded as one of the best compositions of the Apocrypha. The supplicator confesses his sins, protests his unworthiness, and asks forgiveness. It is said to owe its rank as a semi-Biblical book to Luther, since before his time it did not appear among the Apocryphal books.

THE BOOKS OF THE MACCABEES

These five books deal with a definite period of post-Exilic history, the first three making a real contribution to our knowledge of events from about 220-135 B.C. The first book is the most important of the five and deals with events which follow those recorded in the second and third. It should be noted that these letters show no dependence upon one another. The author of the first book evidently was an orthodox Jew living in Palestine. The other two historic books also have a distinctly Jewish viewpoint but do not necessarily come from the same author.

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Two of these books are recognized as canonical by the Roman church.

The revolt of the Jews, which forms the most important subject matter of these books, was both religious and national. Antiochus IV of Syria sought to bring them more completely under the Greek influence and ordered that every village in Palestine should set up a heathen altar. The revolt against this order was led by Mattathias, an aged priest. "Maccabæus," from which "Maccabees" is derived, was the surname of Judas, the third son of Mattathias. Judas Maccabæus is described as "the terror of his enemies and the pride of his nation." The name gradually came to embrace not only the relatives of Judas, but all of his followers and associates in the struggle against Syrian tyranny.

THE BOOK OF THE SECRETS OF ENOCH

This is a voluminous work which consists of a series of revelations said to have been made to Enoch, the patriarch. The visions recorded are varied and the history of Israel from Adam to the time of the author is symbolically represented. The author discusses the fall of angels, the end of the earth, and the abode of spirits. He is much interested in the issues of the future life.

This book forms one of the richest sources for the knowledge of Jewish theology and speculation at about the opening of the Christian era. It probably came into existence at some time from 1 to 50

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A.D. It was much used in the early church until about 800 A.D. when it disappeared. In the comparatively recent past, manuscripts have come to light which have made it possible to reconstruct it. These were found in 1773 A.D., 1851 A.D., and 1887 A.D.

THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

This work originally consisted of fourteen books, twelve of which have survived. The Sibyl of the ancient world was a prophetess, half divine, who was inspired by the gods to prophesy the fate of cities and kingdoms and to give counsel in times of stress. She was supposed to dwell beside streams and in grottoes. In this group of writings there doubtless were several, some of them Jewish and some Christian.

THE APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH

This is rather a long composition which purports to be from the pen of Baruch the son of Nerias, or Neriah. It is written in the first person but very evidently is a compilation, derived from various writers, all of whom would seem to have been Pharisees. As the title indicates, these writings look to the future and symbolically depict the relationship of Israel to other peoples, predicting better times to come. The scene is laid in the neighborhood of Jerusalem at a time immediately preceding and following the overthrow of that city. There is evidence that the different elements in the book were

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combined at about 100 A.D. This book also was lost sight of for many years, but the manuscript finally was discovered in a library at Milan and was published in 1866.

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON

This is a collection of eighteen psalms which evidently were written in Hebrew near the middle of the first century B.C. They were written from the Pharisaic viewpoint. The title of this group of writings has been arbitrarily given as they make no claim to Solomonic authorship. Probably it seemed the natural thing to do to attach his name to a group of psalms which was circulating anonymously. The book is mentioned only in lists of Apocryphal writings and it was first printed in 1626.

THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSES

This purports to be a sort of historical and prophetic address of Moses to Joshua just before the death of Moses and the accession of Joshua to the leadership of Israel. It predicts coming events and is Messianic in its tone. Some of its prophecies evidently involve Herod the Great who died in 4 B.C., and the conclusion is that it was written very early in the Christian era.

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

Certain ancient writings speak of "The Ascension of Isaiah," "The Martyrdom of Isaiah," and "The Vision of Isaiah." It is possible that these may all

THE MODERN APPROACH TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

refer to one book or they may have been incorporated into one. The latter doubtless is true for there are evidences that certain portions belong to different dates. The second section begins with a title, "The vision which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw in the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah." Then he relates the vision in which he is led into the firmament where Satanic powers are at war. From there, he is led successively to each of seven heavens; and finally sees the "Belovèd" which is the term used to designate Messiah. The book contains certain Christian elements which would date it within the present era.

THE BOOK OF JUBILEES

This book, which sometimes is spoken of as the "Apocalypse of Moses," purports to have been given to Moses through angels on Mount Sinai. It also has been called "Little Genesis" and is, in a way, a commentary on Genesis and Exodus. The author is supposed to know many facts of the early Hebrew history which were unknown to those before him. It practically is the narrative of Genesis, rewritten from the viewpoint of the author's own age and as he might desire that things should have happened.

Every event is dated through a system of years, weeks of years, and jubilees. Much stress is laid on all the Jewish feasts and their institution in patriarchal times. The sun was created for the sake of

THE APOCRYPHA

enabling the feasts to be calculated. Good and bad angels participate freely in human affairs. It probably appeared at about the middle of the first century A.D.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

This is a unique work consisting, according to its title, of the dying commands of the twelve sons of Jacob to their children. Each gives an account of his life in which he emphasizes his particular virtue or vice, calling on his children to imitate the virtues and to shun the vices conspicuous in it. In addition to giving an account of their lives, it also contains certain revelations looking to the future. Jewish and Christian elements appear side by side as though it might have been written by a Jew and edited by a Christian. Or it may have been written during the first century A.D. by a Jewish Christian who sought to win his countrymen for Christianity.

In addition to the Old Testament Apocryphal books, there is a much more numerous group which refer to New Testament events and which failed to find their way into the canon. One has only to read this Apocryphal literature to appreciate something of the difficulties which confronted those who constituted the Third Council of Carthage which, in 397 A.D., selected such manuscripts as seemed to bear the stamp of authenticity and thus decided upon the Canon of the New Testament.

Authorities Quoted

- A Gentle Cynic* Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph.D., LL.D.
Apocrypha of the Old Testament . Edwin Cone Bissell, D.D.
Beliefs That Matter . . William Adams Brown, Ph.D., D.D.
Books of the Apocrypha W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D.
Finding God Rev. Russell H. Stafford
Hastings Bible Dictionary
Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions
Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph.D., LL.D.
How God Inspired the Bible . J. Paterson Smyth, B.D., LL.D.
Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament
S. R. Driver, D.D.
Jeremiah T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D.
Old Documents and the New Bible
J. Paterson Smyth, B.D., LL.D.
Outline of Christian Theology . William Newton Clarke, D.D.
Poets of the Old Testament . Alex R. Gordon, D.Litt., D.D.
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Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah . . G. Campbell Morgan
The Christian View of the Old Testament Frederick Carl Eiselen
The Expositor's Bible
The Faith of Modernism Shailer Mathews
The Minor Prophets F. W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S.
The Modern Use of the Bible . Harry Emerson Fosdick, D.D.
The Old Testament and Its Contents
Prof. James Robertson, D.D.
The Old Testament Wisdom Books
Harry Ranston, M.A., Litt.D.
The Prophets of Israel . . W. Robertson Smith, M.A., LL.D.
The Prophets of Israel Carl Heinrich Cornill

AUTHORITIES QUOTED,

The Story of Our Bible Harold B. Hunting
The Twelve Prophets Bernhard Duhm, D.D.

In addition to these, that great number of books by different authors which are read in the course of a lifetime and which all have their influence in provoking thought and shaping conclusions. One quotes from them naturally and unconsciously for they have become a part of him.

Time When the Books Were Written

Genesis	}		444 B.C. or later.
Exodus			
Leviticus			
Numbers			
Deuteronomy			About 650 B.C.
Joshua	}		About 300 B.C.
Judges			
Samuel			
Kings			
Isaiah	{	First Isaiah	740 to 700 B.C.
		Second Isaiah	550 to 538 B.C.
		Third Isaiah	460 to 445 B.C.
Jeremiah			626 to 586 B.C.
Ezekiel			592 to 570 B.C.
Amos			760 to 746 B.C.
Hosea			750 to 736 B.C.
Micah			736 and onwards.
Zephaniah			626 B.C.
Nahum			About 608 B.C.
Habakkuk			605 to 600 B.C.
Haggai	}		520 B.C.
Zechariah			
Malachi			460 B.C.
Joel			About 444 B.C.
Obadiah			About 432 B.C.
Jonah			About 300 B.C.
Job			About 400 B.C.
Psalms			About 300 B.C.
Proverbs			About 250 B.C.

TIME WHEN THE BOOKS WERE WRITTEN

The Five Rolls

Song of Songs	About 300 B.C.
Ruth	400 to 500 B.C.
Lamentations { Earlier portion	570 B.C.
{ Later portion	550 to 530 B.C.
Ecclesiastes	About 200 B.C.
Esther	About 300 B.C.
Daniel	168 to 167 B.C.
Chronicles {	
Ezra {	300 to 250 B.C.
Nehemiah }	

The Kings of Judah

From the division of the kingdom, with the approximate dates of their accession.

Rehoboam	937 B.C.
Abijah (Abijam)	922 B.C.
Asa	918 B.C.
Jehoshaphat	874 B.C.
Jehoram	849 B.C.
Ahaziah (1 year)	843 B.C.
Athaliah (queen)	842 B.C.
Joash	836 B.C.
Amaziah	796 B.C.
Uzziah (Azariah)	780 B.C.
Jotham	740 B.C.
Ahaz	735 B.C.
Hezekiah	727 B.C.
Manasseh	686 B.C.
Amon	641 B.C.
Josiah	639 B.C.
Jehoahaz (3 months)	608 B.C.
Jehoiakim	608 B.C.
Jehoiachin (3 months)	597 B.C.
Zedekiah	597 B.C.
The destruction of Jerusalem	587 B.C.

The Kings of Israel

From the division of the kingdom, with the approximate dates of their accession.

Jeroboam	937 B.C.
Nadab	915 B.C.
Baasha	914 B.C.
Elah	891 B.C.
Zimri (7 days)	889 B.C.
Omri	889 B.C.
Ahab	875 B.C.
Ahaziah	853 B.C.
Joram (Jehoram)	852 B.C.
Jehu	842 B.C.
Jehoahaz	814 B.C.
Joash	797 B.C.
Jeroboam II	782 B.C.
Zechariah (6 months)	741 B.C.
Shallum (1 month)	741 B.C.
Menahem	741 B.C.
Pekahiah	737 B.C.
Pekah	736 B.C.
Hoshea	734 B.C.
The overthrow of Samaria	722 B.C.

Other Important Dates

No dates prior to the time of the division of the kingdom can be considered as really dependable. Of those suggested below, the older ones are only approximate and are offered merely as guides to the sequence of events.

Birth of Abraham, at Ur in Babylonia	About 1950 B.C.
Abraham's call from Haran	Perhaps 25 years later
Death of Abraham	About 1775 B.C.(?)
Joseph sold into Egypt	Perhaps 1691 B.C.
Jacob and family remove to Egypt	" 1668 B.C.
Birth of Moses	" 1533 B.C.
The Exodus from Egypt	" 1453 B.C.
The death of Moses	" 1413 B.C.
The death of Joshua	" 1388 B.C.
The period of Judges in Israel	About 1397 to 1057 B.C.
Saul becomes king	" 1057 B.C.
Samuel, the seer, dies	" 1037 B.C.
David becomes king	" 1017 B.C.
Solomon succeeds David	" 977 B.C.
The Temple founded	" 973 B.C.
The Kingdom divided	" 937 B.C.

* * * * *

The Fall of Samaria (the northern kingdom)	722 B.C.
Sennecherib's Invasion	701 B.C.
Book of the Law discovered	621 B.C.
First Exiles to Babylon	597 B.C.
Destruction of Jerusalem	587 B.C.
Second Exiles to Babylon	587 B.C.
Capture of Babylon by Cyrus	538 B.C.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Exiles return under Zerubbabel	536 B.C.
Rebuilding of the Temple	520 B.C.
Darius king in Babylon	522 B.C.
The Temple completed	516 B.C.
Ezra arrives at Jerusalem	458 B.C.
Nehemiah arrives at Jerusalem	445 B.C.

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